No. 37

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Editor : *Walter Z. Laqueur*

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Walter Z. Laqueur ..... *Soviet Doctrine and the New Countries* 3

Boris Goldenberg ..... *South of Cuba* 12

Ex-Insider ..... *Friendship University—Early Versions* 18

Naum Jasny ..... *Stages of Economic Development* 24

Michael Roof ..... *Soviet Population Trends* 34

Gerd Ruge ..... *Composers' Dilemma* 43

Richard Lindsay ..... *Writers and their Public* 53

Ernest J. Simmons ..... *The Origins of Literary Control, II* 60

S. Müller-Markus ..... *Diamat and Einstein* 68

René Ahlberg ..... *Deborin, Forgotten Philosopher* 79

Francis Carsten ..... *History under Ulbricht* 90

T. Nowakowski ..... *A Note on Polish Literature* 99

Views and Reviews .....*Professor Polanyi and his critics* 104

CPSU History in the remaking 105

The East German Economy 110

A Note on Comecon 113

Franz Kafka's Home City 115

Our Contributors 78

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TOWARDS NATIONAL DEMOCRACY

Soviet Doctrine and the New Countries

W. Z. Laqueur

'NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE' is an awkward designation of doubtful origin, a strange mixture of political and economic (or social) concepts. It has been a cause of despair to politicians and orators—no audience has ever been deeply stirred by a call for or against the national bourgeoisie—and it has not been of much use to historians or economists either; reputations have been damaged but none made as the result of extensive preoccupation with this *Hilfs-Konstruktion*. Nevertheless it refers to a very important problem that has beset Soviet historiography ever since 1917.[1] We are all familiar with the close connection between historiography and current affairs, and not only in Russia, but there is perhaps no other single issue in which the immediate impact of politics on scholarship has been so directly reflected. It has never been an academic topic, always *Zeitgeschichte*; the attitude towards national movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America has been one of the cardinal questions in Soviet foreign policy and is at present perhaps its most important single preoccupation. The problem has been discussed and disputed for decades under various headings—the 'colonial question', the 'problem of the national-revolutionary and the bourgeois-democratic movement in the colonies', 'national reformism', etc. Behind it, the issue at stake has always been whether, and to what degree, co-operation with the national movement in the East was possible and desirable. Different answers to this question have been provided at different times.

At first the communists had no clear ideological guidance because the problem had not existed in Marx's and Engels' day; the modern national movement in the colonies and dependent countries came into being only around the turn of the century, with the emergence of such groups as the Indian National Congress, Sun Yat-sen's movement, the Turkish 'Unity and Progress', and Mustafa Kamil's National party in Egypt. The development of capitalist, or quasi-capitalist, modes of production made unequal progress in the various countries of the East, but even in India, where these developments had reached a far more advanced stage than in most other Asian states (not to mention Africa), the new middle class was still numerically weak; its economic and its political importance was still very limited.

MARX and Engels had expected the European colonies to become independent one day, but not before the revolution had triumphed in Europe. They assumed that the European proletariat would have to take over the colonies temporarily and lead them as fast as possible towards independence. Engels regarded this prospect with mixed feelings, 'for we have enough to do at home'.[2] Engels even envisaged the possibility of the liberated countries of Asia and Africa turning against the revolutionary proletariat in the metropolis. By and large, however, Marx and Engels were preoccupied with Europe and North America, which they regarded as the key areas for the victory of socialism. Lenin, on the other hand, writing after the upheavals in China, Persia,

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[1] I have not been able to find the expression "national bourgeoisie" in Marxist writing prior to 1917, though it may perhaps occasionally have been used in a different sense in the pre-1914 discussion on imperialism (Kautsky, O. Bauer, Hilferding, Rosa Luxemburg). The expression, in its present meaning, was apparently coined after 1917 and first appeared in the writings of Lenin, Radek, Safarov, Pavlovich-Weltman and others.

[2] Engels to Kautsky, 12 September 1882, in Benedikt Kautsky (ed.) *Friedrich Engels Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky* (Vienna 1955), p. 63.

and Turkey between 1906 and 1912, took count of the changes that were then taking place and noted that a new great storm centre had come into being; he even expressed on one occasion the then novel idea that the fate of the world would ultimately be decided in the 'East' since the majority of mankind was concentrated in China, India, and Russia. The class-conscious workers of Europe, he predicted, now had the support of their Asian comrades whose numbers were growing not daily but hourly. The titles of some of his articles are significant: 'Inflammable Material in World Politics', 'The Awakening of Asia', 'Backward Europe and Progressive Asia', and there were analogous articles by some other orthodox Marxists such as Radek, Pavlovich, and Rothstein in the German *Neue Zeit* and other theoretical organs of the day.

Nevertheless, there was not a single orthodox Marxist thinker at the time who attributed decisive importance to developments in the colonial world, and for that reason it would be vain to look for any systematic analysis on their part of the leadership of this new revolutionary movement in the East. Lenin thought Sun Yat-sen a utopian socialist of the *narodnik* type, hardly worthy of serious discussion; there was no real confrontation between the revolutionary movement in Russia and in the other countries of the East prior to 1917. The first confrontation took place at the second Congress of the Communist International in July 1920. By that time the expectation that revolution would triumph in other European countries had come to naught, whereas the revolutionary ferment continued in a number of Asian countries. In one passage of the final draft of Lenin's theses the new line was clearly expressed: 'The Communist International must be ready to establish temporary relationships, and even alliances with the bourgeois-democracy of the colonies and the backward countries. It must not, however, amalgamate with it. It must retain the independent character of the proletarian movement. . . .' Lenin's chief antagonist on this occasion was the Indian Roy, who thought that the bourgeois-democratic nationalist movement in the colonies should not be supported because it strove for the establishment of a bourgeois order; support should be given to the mass struggle of the poor ignorant peasants and workers, and efforts directed to ensure that the leadership of the national movement would from the very beginning be in the hands of a revolutionary vanguard.[3]

The Comintern Congress adopted both Lenin's theses and Roy's draft (in a somewhat watered down version) and thus left the matter in abeyance. Neither was free of inconsistencies. Lenin favoured a temporary alliance on conditions which, if taken literally, would have made the alliance quite illusory; he opposed not only the social democratic ('reformist') elements in the national movement, but also Pan-Islamism, Pan-Mongolism, and other such radical nationalist and pan-movements, and he demanded as a condition of the alliance that the bourgeois national movement should not oppose communist attempts to educate the masses in a revolutionary spirit, attempts which would eventually lead to their taking over the national movement. It is doubtful whether any bourgeois national movement in the East, however weak, would have been ready to co-operate on such suicidal conditions. Roy's proposals, on the other hand, even more extremist, would have condemned the Comintern to inactivity, for he realised that the Asian revolution would at first be neither proletarian nor agrarian; there would have been no opening in these circumstances for a communist movement insisting on its ideological purity.

This early discussion, and the views then expressed, overshadowed Soviet and communist thinking on the subject for the next thirty-five years. Between 1920 and 1955 the party line oscillated between a conditional collaboration with the national movement in the colonies, and the struggle against its leadership if it was not communist in character. Broadly speaking, 'liberal' views prevailed between 1920 and 1927. At the sixth Congress of the Comintern—which followed the breakdown of communist-nationalist cooperation in China—a 'hard' line was adopted with the beginning

[3] This debate has been described in considerable detail in Allen S. Whiting's *Soviet policies in China, 1917–1924* (New York, 1954), pp. 42–58.

of the so-called 'third period'; the leaders of the national movement were attacked as 'national reformists', and only in the middle thirties did a more conciliatory approach prevail again. After Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union all 'class' considerations were subordinated to the struggle against fascism, in which every ally was welcome. After the second world war, however, and in particular between 1948 and 1953, there was something of a revival of the 'third period' attitude; the national movement, with a very few exceptions, again became an enemy of communism. This phase lasted until after Stalin's death when, as we know, the attitude towards national movements was greatly modified.

HOW close is the Soviet image of the national bourgeoisie to reality? Communist views have frequently been modified over the years and present-day Soviet works of reference have an unfortunate tendency to refrain from publishing special entries on the subject; they carry detailed articles about the 'Compradore bourgeoisie' but not about the subject of this essay. Our own, unauthoritative definition would be that 'national bourgeoisie' is the Soviet designation for the 'post-feudal' ruling stratum and the leadership of the national movement in colonies and other dependencies. In communist eyes (and not only in theirs') the main difference between the bourgeoisie in the West and the middle classes in the colonies is the numerical, political, and economic weakness of the latter. The argument runs that, since the capitalist mode of production developed only much later in Asia and Africa than in Europe, since the metropolis, moreover, was not usually interested in the development of a local industry in the colonies but often tried to hamper its development, the bourgeoisie in these countries appeared much later on the scene and, with a few notable exceptions (Japan), never attained an influence comparable to that of the middle classes in the West. Communist authors also point out that the working class in the colonies developed earlier than the bourgeoisie because the first industrial enterprises were usually owned by outside sponsors.

According to the traditional Soviet view, the bourgeoisie in the dependent countries is divided: there is a minority, the *compradores*, who collaborate with foreign imperialism and serve as middlemen between foreign capital and the local market. On closer inspection it appears that the Soviet definition of the *compradore* is as vague and, on occasion, as self-contradictory as the definition of the national bourgeoisie. The *Politicheski Slovar* of 1958 (p. 278) describes the compradores as trying by every possible means to turn their respective countries into markets for the metropolitan country and into a source of raw materials for the foreign capital. But the *Malaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia*[4] gives a totally different definition: The compradores are the leading traders, bankers, and also some of the leading industrialists of a given country. The two definitions contradict each other, for it is difficult to imagine that a leading industrialist would be concerned to make his country a market for foreign competitors and a source of raw materials for them. Such definitions should be approached with caution; they are always based on economic categories, but closer inspection often shows that the economic factors are not always decisive in the Soviet overall appraisal: compradores are, in the last resort, all those who follow a conciliatory policy towards the West, whatever their 'class character' or their social basis.

The national bourgeoisie, on the other hand, are all those who follow, at least temporarily, an anti-Western policy. The common interests between the communists and the national bourgeoisie are twofold, relating both to the 'former regime' (mostly, not always accurately, called 'feudal') and to the colonial power. The idea is that a considerable part of the national bourgeoisie takes part in the general anti-imperialist struggle; in those countries where communism is as yet not very strong, the national bourgeoisie leads the national struggle. During the fight for independence the national bourgeoisie plays a progressive role—very much in contrast to the bourgeoisie in the industrialised countries of the West, where it has long been reactionary. But once independence has been achieved, the national

[4] Vol. IV, p. 1106.

bourgeoisie loses its progressive character and its policy becomes 'double-faced' (I am following here the most recent exposition available—*Filosofskaya Entsiklopedia*, 1960).[5] After the common national aims have been achieved, other problems have to be solved; but the national bourgeoisie is unable 'in view of its narrow class interests' to carry out the needed social changes, to tackle agrarian reform, promote industrialisation, raise the standard of living of the population, etc. Such changes can be carried out only (to quote a standard formula) 'with the active participation of the popular masses led by the working class and its party', meaning the communists.

IF we accept these current views as retroactively valid, it follows that Moscow was mistaken in not supporting the national bourgeoisie all along in its anti-imperialist struggle. This is by now fairly generally realised; but since all major countries have by now attained independence, it is a reflection of purely historical interest.[6] Another conclusion is of more topical importance: when the liberation from foreign rule has been achieved, the national bourgeoisie has fulfilled its historical function, and the communist parties (and the communist states) will have to oppose them.

We know that this has not happened. In 1947, when India achieved independence, it was communist policy to oppose Nehru and the Congress; their new independence was regarded as a mere sham, and Professor Varga, it will be recalled, got into serious trouble for taking a more realistic view.

Fourteen years later, on the other hand, relations between the Soviet Union and countries such as India, Burma, Indonesia, Ceylon, the United Arab Republic, are closer than ever before, though the national bourgeoisie (in theory) has already had its day and should now be regarded as a reactionary force.

THREE arguments could be given for the continued support for the national bourgeoisie: though independence has been achieved by most countries throughout Asia and Africa, there are still many bones of contention between the former colonies and the West. Indonesia, for instance, wants to incorporate New Guinea, the UAR has territorial ambitions in various directions. Many newly independent countries are anti-Western or at any rate want to follow an independent line.

In theory some division of labour should be possible by means of which local communist parties oppose the national bourgeoisie while the Soviet Union as a state continues to cooperate with the newly independent countries. In practice, this is hardly feasible; Soviet professions of friendship towards India or the United Arab Republic would be invalidated if the local communist parties followed a radically different line. Wherever such a division of labour has been tried (e.g., the attacks on Nasser and Kassem in the communist press during the last year) it followed considerable provocation of the communists—the arrest of their leaders, the closure of their newspapers, etc.

It is also argued that circumstances beyond their control compel the national bourgeoisie to follow a progressive line in their domestic policy; they have, for instance, to strengthen the public sector in contrast to the private enterprise sector, and to introduce some form of state capitalism whether they want to or not. It should be noted here that state capitalism, for obvious reasons, is a progressive factor in communist thinking, at least for the time being, very much in contrast to 'monopoly capitalism'.[7] Lastly, it has been said by some communists for the last six years or so, that the class analysis as practised in the past in the under-developed countries was too crude, and

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[5] Vol. I, p. 202.

[6] Soviet literature expressing the "hard line" was published until well into 1956. But the turning point was 1955; *Kommunist* (in an unsigned editorial in May 1955) had criticised Soviet Orientalists for exaggerations in denouncing movements such as Kemalism and Gandhism. It took about a year to effect the readjustment because of the technical delays involved (books already in print, etc.).

[7] According to *Osnovy Marksizma-Leninizma*: 'in the countries of the East state capitalism in its present form is not a tool of the imperialist monopolies; on the contrary, it stimulates an anti-imperialist movement'.

the lumping together of various groups and strata as 'national bourgeoisie' too sweeping. It has been suggested on a number of occasions that re-examination and redefinition are urgently needed.[8]

IT is extremely doubtful, even on communist premisses, whether the 'national bourgeoisie' as commonly defined is really the leading force in most of the newly independent countries. The Indian Congress party, for instance, is an alliance of social groups of a very heterogeneous character, and the economic policy followed by the Indian government in recent years clearly shows that the great landowners, bankers, and industrialists often failed to get their way. The ruling circles in such countries as Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, or the United Arab Republic, are not exactly 'bourgeois' in composition or social origin; it would be difficult to argue that they act as agents of the capitalist entrepreneurs, let alone of finance capital. As a result, various new designations have been thought up. Some Soviet writers now refer to the preponderant influence of the 'lower national bourgeoisie', others draw attention to the role of the lower middle class, and still others have even brought in entirely new concepts, such as the 'military intelligentsia'.

Some Soviet writers have argued that Marxist-Leninist discussion has been bedevilled for too long by certain shibboleths of the past—such as for instance the resolutions of the sixth Comintern Congress in 1928 (that only the industrial bourgeoisie could be part of the national bourgeoisie), or Stalin's thesis that the Indian national bourgeoisie was irrevocably split in 1925 between 'compromisers' and 'patriots'.[9] Some Soviet economists and historians have suggested discarding the term national bourgeoisie altogether; others, in a less revolutionary vein, have proposed to differentiate in future between a higher, middle, and lower national bourgeoisie. The higher national bourgeoisie are those most likely to become pro-imperialist, whereas the lower sections of the national bourgeoisie, the owners of medium and small enterprises, cottage industries, small building organisations, etc., are usually ready to follow an 'anti-feudal', anti-imperialist line, and to co-operate with the communists in the national liberation movement. The middle sections are said to waver, sometimes supporting the 'progressive forces', sometimes turning against them. (There is not much to choose between this division and the 'classical' Leninist definition of the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries of the West.) Some communists think that, *pace* Mao Tse-tung, the concept of the compradore bourgeoisie does not make sense in other parts of the world; can all those engaged in trade with foreigners, co-operating with investors from abroad, exporting raw materials, or engaged in industrial projects with foreign firms be regarded as compradores? As one Soviet historian put it 'In reality it does not always happen that way'.[10] Finally (and here we face a real innovation), it has been maintained that any future analysis of the national bourgeoisie will have to be based not only (and perhaps not mainly) on economic factors.[11] With that we pass the borderline between the doctrinaire approach and a realistic and unprejudiced analysis of the economic and political state of affairs in the *tiers monde*, and a few critical observations may be called for.

THE Leninist and post-Leninist image of the national bourgeoisie is a strange mixture of myth and reality. Communist theses

[8] There have been three conferences in the Soviet bloc in recent years on the national bourgeoisie. The discussion in 1955 was opened by V. A. Maslennikov, then editor of *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie* (see *S.V.* IV, 1955, pp. 138–46 for a short report); another conference in 1956, opened by V. V. Balabushevich, lasted longer and went into greater detail (*S.V.* I, 1957, pp. 174–84). The participants in these two Moscow conferences were economists and historians, whereas the participants in the Leipzig seminar on the national bourgeoisie and the national liberation movement (May 1959) were apparently exclusively party ideologists (see *World Marxist Review*, August and September 1959). As far as can be judged from the published reports, the two Moscow discussions were on a higher level of sophistication.

[9] I. M. Reisner in the 1956 Moscow discussion on the national bourgeoisie, *S.V.*, I, 1957, p. 179.

[10] A. A. Guber in *S.V.* I, 1957, p. 181; *see also* Kia Nouri in *World Marxist Review*, August 1959, p. 61.

[11] A. A. Guber, *ibid.*

and publications can frequently serve as a healthy corrective to certain schools of thought in the West, where until fairly recently far too little attention has been paid to the economic and social aspects of events in Asia and Africa; 'development', after all, has become a magic slogan only during the last decade. Far too often Western observers have written and talked about the 'national movement' in these parts of the world only in the most general terms, without any attempt at further analysing the important differences between countries, or the differentiation within each country. Many Western historians have concentrated their research on the traditional forces in Eastern societies, ignoring or belittling the new forces that have emerged over the last decades. This refers not only to economic and social analysis, but also to political movements. Even during the worst years of the 'third period' and between 1948 and 1953, Soviet and communist observers were not always wrong; this goes in particular for their interest in the emerging radical forces. Since in many of these countries the radical forces were the 'wave of the future', they could not go far wrong.

The weaknesses of the Soviet approach have been painfully obvious to the more sophisticated Moscow observers of the Asian and African scene. For a long time Soviet writers were inclined to generalise about the national movement in Asia and Africa in a way that was often not less absurd than the generalisations of Western writers about 'nationalism' in the East. Ideological concepts were transplanted from one part of the world to another, often with disastrous consequences. Sometimes the reason was ideological blinkers, on other occasions wishful thinking, and frequently ignorance. (It should be recalled that until recently Soviet experts had to follow events in Asia and Africa from afar, and to base their analysis on secondhand sources.) The almost constant exaggeration of the political importance of the working class can be mentioned as illustrating the ideological blinkers. One Soviet Middle East expert, writing as late as 1955, asserted that *only* the proletariat could lead the national liberation movement; the national bourgeoisie had tried at times to put itself at the head of the movement, but, wavering and inclined to compromise with imperialism, it had shown itself incapable of leadership. Less than two years later, the same expert had to swallow her words: the active and widespread participation of the bourgeoisie in the national liberation struggle was a characteristic feature of the anti-imperialist battle in the Middle East; the national bourgeoisie had grown much stronger, whereas the proletariat (the leading force of 1955) was only *beginning* to play the role of a vanguard.[12]

These and similar opinions were based on the predictions outlined at the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928, according to which the colonies would achieve political independence only after the working class (in alliance with the peasants and petty-bourgeois elements) had won leadership of the national liberation movement. After 1955 communist observers freely admitted that political independence has been achieved under what they call national bourgeois auspices. They had been mistaken, but find at least one mitigating circumstance: 'The new possibility arose mainly due to the growth of the socialist world and the rapid advance of the national liberation movement on a world scale'.[13]

The treatment of Africa in Soviet writings may serve as an illustration of a wrong attitude probably determined more by ignorance of the facts than by reliance on ideological prejudice: Soviet publications on Africa (admittedly very few until the last year or so) have always operated freely with concepts such as 'proletariat', 'class struggle', 'national bourgeoisie' in tropical Africa; firsthand observation on the spot would have convinced the writers within a week that these were flights of fantasy. It has only lately and reluctantly been admitted (for instance, with regard to Guinea) that a national bourgeoisie does not exist, that there is no exploitation in agriculture, and that one cannot talk about the proletariat as a class in a country with no more than 90,000 wage-earners.

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[12] L. Vatolina in *S.V.*, II, 1955, p. 66. L. Vatolina in *Araby v Borbe za nezavisimost* (Moscow, 1957), pp. 14, 18.

[13] Idris Cox in *World Marxist Review*, loc. cit. p. 66.

BUT the main weakness of the neo-Leninist concept has been its one-sided application of economic categories and its disregard of all other factors and motives. This has often led Soviet and communist observers to misjudge a given situation, and to perform tightrope acts to square realities with the doctrine. The very social composition of the communist parties in Asia, Africa, and (as far as I can judge), also Latin America should have provided them with food for thought. It may be trivial to recall that neither Marx nor Engels nor Lenin was of proletarian origin, and that intellectuals have always played a leading part in the Western communist movement. But the socialist, and later the communist movement in the West, also had its Bebels and Thorez, Thaelmanns and Tomskis, and sooner or later it also acquired a proletarian 'mass basis'. In most Asian and African countries the leadership of the communist parties is made up exclusively of members of what Mao calls the 'lower intelligentsia' (many of whom are 'national bourgeois' by origin); in many places the rank and file, too, more often than not belong to the same stratum rather than to the working class. Revolutionary nationalism in Asia and Africa is a movement *par excellence* of the intelligentsia. We would look in vain for a careful analysis of this phenomenon in communist writing, where it is maintained to this day that the intelligentsia is not a class but a free floating stratum and therefore of no great consequence.

Soviet writers have frequently been mistaken in their appraisal of the real forces behind the national movement, just as they misjudged the class character of fascism in Europe. In communist theory (which in this point at least has not been basically modified to this very day) the rise of fascism and national socialism was explained as the victory of monopoly capitalism—the essentially petty-bourgeois character of fascism has never been openly admitted. In Asia and Africa, Soviet writers have consistently misjudged the basically *political* character of anti-imperialism, and they therefore underrated for many years the revolutionary potential of this movement. The lawyers, students, teachers, and officers in such countries as Egypt or Iraq, Cuba or Indonesia, did not turn against Western imperialism because their class interest compelled them to do so; anti-imperialism is a very complicated phenomenon in which national mystique and other political and psychological factors play a central role. For decades Soviet writers ignored the existence of an Asian and African nationalism that was by no means a bourgeois monopoly but more intensely felt in other groups and classes.

Communist theoreticians (as well as some writers in the West) have refused to admit so far that class interests are not decisive in the policy of such leaders as Nasser, Kassem, or Castro; in a way they are, like the stratum from which they hail, 'free floating'. Vested interests do not dictate their policy; they can opt for or against collaboration with the communists; the decision will almost always be a political or psychological one, only to a very limited extent guided by economic considerations. It is therefore utterly misleading to define a leader (or a junta) of this type as the representative of certain class interests. Typical of this kind of practice is a speech by a British Communist theoretician made at the international conference in Leipzig called in 1959 to discuss the question of the national bourgeoisie: '. . . it seems to me that the dominant role in Egypt is exercised by the national bourgeoisie, and that Nasser is a spokesman of the Misr monopoly group which has its grip on almost the whole of Egyptian economy and is seeking to extend its domination to Syria's cotton trade, including the Central Bank of Syria'. This kind of analysis makes about as much sense as the representation of Hitler as a tool of Krupp and Thyssen, or of Mussolini as a puppet of Fiat, Pirelli, or perhaps Montecatini.

IF class analysis were of any value as a guide to political action, the socialists should have been the party nearest to the communists in Asia and Africa as well as in Latin America. But in fact the communists have found it much easier to cooperate with the 'upper national bourgeoisie' than with the socialists—which goes for the Praja Socialists in India, the Indonesian Socialists, the Ba'ath party in the Arab world, as well as for most Latin American

countries. To say that this argument does not hold water, because the socialists are the communists' main political competitors, and this consideration distorts economic motives, is not good enough, for the same distortion is at work with regard to parties and movements that can on no account be regarded as direct competitors of the communists. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was lower in class origin than any other movement in Egyptian history. Most of its members were petty-bourgeois, working class, and even peasant. Nevertheless, communist historiography has been extremely critical of this group (despite its very active participation in the anti-imperialist struggle). The same goes, incidentally, for similar groups in other Asian and African countries, such as the communalist parties in India, some rightwing groups in Persia, etc.; they are all predominantly lower class in composition; it is their religious as well as nationalist fanaticism, and their generally 'non-progressive character' which made the communists, not unnaturally, regard them as reactionary forces. In this they may be quite right, but it only shows that in communist practice—in their policy as well as in their historiography—the class character of a social or political movement is often not the decisive criterion of appraisal

Since the communist parties and the Soviet bloc have not been doing too badly in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America during the last decade, it is legitimate to ask how they could have achieved such successes with a theory which, to put it mildly, often proved impractical and unhelpful. The question may, strictly speaking, be outside the framework of this paper, but since it is not an academic one, an answer may as well be attempted. To the present writer it would appear that there are several explanations. The communists, to begin with, while rigid in their adherence to ideology, have by no means adopted the whole body of Marx's and Lenin's theories; whenever necessary they have disregarded that part of the theoretical heritage that was inapplicable or inconvenient. Moreover communists, as a revolutionary party, were natural favourites in countries facing a revolutionary situation; despite their mistaken 'class analysis', they were in many countries the only party with a coherent conception of the transformation of society, which is more than can be said about most of their competitors.

THERE is no good reason to assume that 1955–56 saw the last major revision in the Soviet attitude to the national movement in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. On the contrary, it is almost certain that the present leaders of the national movement in these parts will fare no better than Chiang Kai-shek (who in his own lifetime turned from a 'progressive patriot' into 'a reactionary running-dog of American imperialism')—unless, of course, they come to accept the communist blueprint for an 'independent national democracy' as a transitional stage towards the full transformation into a communist society. For the progressive role of the national bourgeoisie, like the progressive role of the bourgeoisie in the advanced industrialised countries, is only of a temporary character; gradually it turns reactionary, becomes an impediment to historical development as the communists envisage it. According to the Chinese, this has already happened; according to Soviet spokesmen, cooperation with the 'national bourgeoisie' should still be continued.

Since the Sukarnos, Nehrus, and Nassers are committed to a policy of neutralism, of industrial development, and of state capitalism, they still fulfil a useful function in Soviet eyes. Under their regime, the argument runs, the conditions are created for the emergence of a mass party of the proletariat. It is quite intelligible that these assumptions should be the subject of discussion and dissension among communists; for even if they are correct from a purely economic point of view (which is far from certain), it is doubtful whether the political climate in the 'guided democracies' of Asia and Africa is necessarily conducive to the development of strong communist parties. It may happen that way in some countries, but it is doubtful whether it will in others.

The manifesto of the 81 Communist parties meeting in Moscow (November 1960) contained a reference to 'national democracy' as

the higher phase of a national liberation movement in which the national bourgeoisie is compelled to share power with other forces (such as the communists); the internal structure of such countries (Cuba being the obvious example) may not be communist, but they follow a revolutionary domestic and foreign policy. (The expression 'national democratic', in contradistinction to 'national bourgeois', was used in Chinese literature before that meeting, which tends to show that the Chinese representatives had a hand in pressing for its adoption.) However, a clear definition of the peculiarities of the 'national democratic' regimes has not yet been given, and some communist writers (such as Fuad Nassar in *Sovremenny Vostok* No. 2, 1961), have commented on 'national democracy' as if it were a synonym for the rule of the national bourgeoisie. A. Arzumanyan (writing in *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnie Otnosheniya*, No. 2, 1961), has defined national democracy as the 'transitional stage towards socialism': 'As the masses become disillusioned with bourgeois leadership, the power and the influence of the communist parties increase'.

Nevertheless, the appraisal of the national bourgeoisie has been since 1956 perhaps clearer and more stable than ever before. Soviet commentators, if they use due caution and digest the lessons of the past, will probably not be taken unaware by the next change of line towards a certain country or group of countries. Nevertheless, it is not certain that the element of surprise has been eliminated once and for all. Communism in the sixties is polycentric, and it is quite possible that other centres will come into being in addition to those existing today. If the communist outlook has in the past been shaped largely by a compromise between ideology and the realities of the state of the world, these realities already include a new important factor, perhaps even a new dimension, on which as yet little is known: the whole complex of relations between the communist countries, and in particular between the main seats of power, and the emergence of national-communist regimes which may not be just a 'transitional stage' towards full communism but a new political phenomenon. The whole problem has entered a new phase.

As these lines are being written (May 1961), a certain hardening in the line can already be observed. Nehru has been criticised in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* for having declared that he was not sufficiently informed about the rights and wrongs of the Cuban affair; several Indonesian ministers have been attacked for not living up to Communist expectations (*Aziya i Afrika sevodnya*, March 1961); Nasser and Kassem have come under fire in the *World Marxist Review*, *Trud*, and other publications, and the ubiquitous Mr. I. I. Potekhin has denied an indigenous and independent African socialism in a newly published booklet. *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie* (No. 1, 1961), calls on Soviet Orientalists to study closely the 'dual character' of the national bourgeoisie, and *Mirovoe khoziaistvo i mirovaya otnosheniya* (April 1961) appeals for more differentiation between the 'reactionary' and the 'progressive' strata within the national bourgeoisie. There have been other recent publications to the same effect.

The present article is concerned solely with SOVIET *views on the national bourgeoisie and, consequently, on the national movement. Discussion of the political, social, and economic role of the middle classes in Asia and Africa, their impact on the national movement, and the ideas on this subject developed by Asian and African nationalist leaders, however important and fascinating, lie outside its scope.*

SOUTH OF CUBA

Latin America in the Soviet Mirror

Boris Goldenberg

CASTRO'S revolution has given an impetus to Latin American studies in the USSR; for many decades Soviet political writers treated Latin America as a sort of backwater. Until a few years ago this lack of interest was reflected in the paucity of Soviet literature devoted to the 20 republics south of the Rio Grande. Now, all this is changing.

Among the first manifestations of this new interest are two books, published almost simultaneously in Moscow: the first is *Problemy Sovremennoi Latinskoi Ameriki* (Problems of Contemporary Latin America), edited by M. V. Danilevich and A. F. Shugolski, and the second *Latinskaya Amerika v proshlom i nastoiashchem* (Latin America: Past and Present); editors: V. V. Volski, I. R. Gurevich, I. V. Daskevich, and L. I. Sleskin. The first consists of eleven chapters written by Soviet specialists: three are devoted to an investigation of American relations with Latin America; one to the problems of the Latin American common market; another describes the development of nationalism; other contributors analyse the agrarian question, the Catholic Church, the development of state capitalism, the revolution in Venezuela, and the special problems of Brazil. The second book combines contributions by Soviet authors with chapters written by Latin Americans, and has a long bibliography of Russian books and articles about Latin America.

It is doubtful whether anybody could get a better understanding of the problems of the Ibero-American continent from reading this vast amount of heterogeneous information, packed with statistical data, but lacking any original or comprehensive presentation or interpretation of the past and present of the different countries. There is nothing about geographical conditions; not a word about demography (Latin America's population is increasing more rapidly than any other in the world); the specific 'Iberian' determinants of Latin American history are hardly mentioned at all. The 'intelligentsia' are not treated separately. When the 'intellectuals' are mentioned, they appear as 'allies' of the workers and peasants, although in fact the 'intellectual' sectors of the middle classes, especially the students, form the spearhead of the revolutionary struggle, while the industrial workers have remained, in many countries, quite passive, or have become followers of demagogic dictators. This rather unpalatable fact is never stated, and its omission explains the fanciful analysis of the Cuban revolution as given by the former member of Batista's cabinet, Marinello, who presents the Cuban communists as the true leaders of the Castro revolution. It also explains the absence of any reference to Peron, with whose followers the communists maintain close relations.

Maybe it is too much to expect a really new analysis of Latin American development from Moscow, which would in that case have to abandon the old Marxian class concepts, a Procrustean bed which falsifies all social relations in most underdeveloped countries. It would be too much to expect them to recognise that the dynamically most important, most revolutionary 'class' in most of the Latin American countries consists of those who do not properly belong to any 'social class' at all, because they are in a sense 'outcasts', being chronically unemployed or underemployed. Still, one might expect some new ground to be broken in 'theoretical' books. Apart from excellent presentations of special problems (e.g. Professor Rama's analysis of Uruguay), the descriptions are entirely conventional. The chapters devoted to the agrarian problem, to the *latifundia*, the semi-feudal conditions and the peasant misery in most of these countries do not differ fundamentally from the

analysis presented by 'bourgeois' authors—or rather they differ in being extremely superficial.

IN its present state, Latin American agriculture is unable to feed the growing population, making it necessary to use much of the scarce foreign exchange for food imports; it has failed to develop an internal market to stimulate the rise of national industries; it is in part directed by parasitical landlords who do not invest their profits productively, etc. These landlords, together with 'American imperialists', are the principal scapegoats (nowhere do we find it mentioned that the *poorest* Latin American country, Haiti, has no *latifundia*, and that the *richest* section of the continent, Puerto Rico, owes its relative welfare to its close relations with the United States). The solution favoured by the authors, the liquidation of the big estates and their distribution among individual peasants, simplifies the highly complex problem. Without heavy investments in roads, houses, machinery, fertilisers, education, the establishment of marketing facilities, of agricultural credit and, in some countries, large-scale resettlement, such land reforms would only increase the general misery. None of the authors tries to analyse the partial failure of some reforms, such as those in Bolivia or Mexico. Neither is there any mention of *collectivist* solutions, such as those tried out in some of the Mexican *ejidos* and characteristic of the Cuban agrarian revolution.

The general image presented as a 'theoretical basis' for revolutionary action is simple: Predominantly agrarian and feudal after getting their independence, the Latin American countries have become victims of imperialism. Collaborating with the 'feudal oligarchies' and the 'compradore bourgeoisie', the United States monopolists have *deformed* the economic and social structure of the continent, implanted monocultures and an utter dependence on the North American market, hindered any sound industrialisation, exploited men and nature for their own profit, and frustrated the growth of democracy and national independence. This has now produced social forces opposed to further imperialist exploitation. Under the leadership of the working class (which is itself led by its communist vanguard), the peasants are rising. Side by side with them stands the 'national' bourgeoisie—distinct from the 'compradore' bourgeoisie and the 'bureaucratic' bourgeoisie composed of the higher civil servants and army officers. The rising opposition forces the governments to compromise, to introduce some 'anti-imperialist', 'state-capitalist' reforms. These reforms, however, will remain half-hearted and insufficient so long as friends of imperialism remain in control.

The aim of the progressive struggle is not socialist but nationalist, democratic, and anti-imperialist. In order to establish successful 'popular fronts', anti-capitalist slogans must be muted and the desire of peasants for private property must be recognised. Neutralism and close relations with the countries of the Soviet bloc are corollaries of the successful struggle.

Now it is obvious that this analysis is not the *result* of any objective study of the highly complex situation; it is rather the *starting* point for the entire presentation, which is no more than can be expected when truth is deemed to have a party character.

A genuine analysis of the reasons for Latin America's under-development would have to start with certain historical, geographic, and demographic data: the colonisation of vast spaces by the Conquistadores, who lacked the capitalist spirit and had no traditions of self-government; the fact that the struggles for liberation were not accompanied by radical social change; the impact of capitalism from the outside; the inability of the ruling classes of Latin America to adapt themselves to changing conditions; the fact that all these countries must transform their agriculture and industrialise while being at the same time in the midst of a demographic explosion, etc. Since they fail to analyse any of these factors, the authors can simply ignore or minimise the undoubted truth that these countries need to import not only capital but also enterpreneurial skills. In so far as these countries have developed their potentialities, this is primarily due to economic assistance from outside; and this has been

recognised by some of the original anti-imperialist leaders of Latin America, such as Haya de la Torre.

However, 'economic imperialism' is obviously not moved by philanthropic intentions. Capital goes out in search of profits—and these profits must compensate for the insecurity of the investment.[1] These profits have to be, at least in part, remitted home, and this naturally constitutes a drag on the balance of payments.[2] It is also true that the investment possibilities preferred by foreign investors are not necessarily those which are the best from the standpoint of a balanced growth of the local economies; that, on the contrary, imbalances of all kinds are likely. These disadvantages have to be looked at as the price to be paid for foreign contribution to a development which would not otherwise come about.[3] If this simple fact is not even mentioned, we get a balance sheet with the assets left out. This is precisely the image which the Russian authors are eager to create.

The lack of conceptual clarity permits them to avoid any differentiation between the effects of 'liberalism' and 'imperialism',[4] while the responsibility of the Latin Americans themselves for not having made a better use of the foreign contributions to promote development in suitable directions is minimised.

IN levelling their charges against 'foreign capitalists' the authors are, apparently, not worried by their own contradictions and inconsistencies. On page 15 of the first book the author manages to accuse United States investors of having, in a typically 'imperialist' and 'colonialist' way, invested the bulk of their capital in raw-material production, neglecting investments in other industries, while some lines further on he admits that United States investments in Latin American manufacturing industry grew from 7 per cent of all investments in 1929 to 19·2 per cent in 1957. But, on page 20, the foreign capitalists are found guilty of having neglected *heavy* industry. Another author, writing about Venezuela (pp. 245 and 153), charges American capitalists with having begun to invest in industry, thus endangering local manufactures, although on page 251 they had been accused of having 'deformed' Venezuela's economy by over-investment in oil. One author complains (p. 20) that imperialism had made the development of machine-building industries impossible, while another tells us that 'the post-war years have witnessed a relatively rapid growth of industry in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, and Mexico. New industries are developing—among them machine-building' (p. 323).

The fact that the bulk of foreign investment in Latin America is found in raw materials and extractive industries is undubitable, but needs three qualifications: first, the development of these industries was important from the standpoint of these countries, which would certainly be worse off without them; secondly, the huge capital sums could only come from outside; and thirdly, the export of these products constitutes the main source of foreign exchange, without which no further development would be thinkable; and this apart from the taxes and royalties paid to the governments by the foreign companies, and the wages and salaries paid to the workers and employees, which are almost invariably above the average.

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[1] At the beginning of the 1950s gross profits reached 12·4 per cent. in the US and 18·8 per cent. in Latin America. During the latter part of the same decade the average yield of invested capital in Latin America has been calculated as 13·9 per cent. (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Foreign Capital in Latin America*, 1955, and Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, *US–Latin American Relations*, prepared by the University of Chicago, 1960, p. 12).

[2] The complaint that at certain times the total of remittances may exceed net capital imports (excluding reinvested profits) fails to take into account the contribution of past capital-inflow to gross domestic product and to the capacity to import. (See Pan-American Union, *Financing Economic Development in Latin America*, Washington 1958.)

[3] It is true that railroads, port-facilities, etc. in Latin America were built by foreign capital in order to export products, and that there is therefore a scarcity of 'intra-Latin-American' communications. But without foreign capital even the existing communications, which after all are very important for these countries, would not have been built.

[4] In the absence of state intervention market forces operating on the 'law of comparative advantages' in foreign trade have, naturally, transformed Latin American countries into producers of raw materials and agricultural products and importers of industrial goods.

It is, admittedly, true that many of those investments have created imbalances and have set up 'modern' sectors of the economy side by side with the primitive sectors. It is here that the national governments should intervene, to plan the use of the foreign contribution to the economy to better purpose. That the Latin American governments have not done so cannot be imputed simply or even mainly to the 'foreign imperialists'.

Where the internal market is sufficiently developed and the necessary protection is given, foreign capital participates in the development of manufacturing industries, to which it contributes the essential technical knowledge. As to heavy industry, that too is developing in Latin America (as admitted by one author, who writes that 'steel production has grown considerably in Latin America'); in the second place, it has to be understood why these enterprises are mostly government-owned and why foreign investors are reluctant to invest in them. The problem is quite simple, as can be seen from the example of a steel mill in Colombia:

> The new Paz del Rio blast furnace and steel mill (capacity 122 thousand tons) dramatically illustrates Colombia's basic transportation problem. Built in isolated highlands at an elevation of almost 9,000 feet, 150 miles north of Bogota and even farther from other large consuming centres, it is ideally located for raw materials. But Paz del Rio steel delivered in Colombia is sometimes more costly than imported steel because of transportation and manufacturing costs. Only a high protective tariff at the expense of the Colombian consumer can make the project 'economic'.[5]

Whatever one may think about particular cases of state-intervention and state-capitalism, the necessity of much of it is recognised by the majority of contemporary observers:

> The need for state intervention in economic development is due, in Latin America, to institutional, economic, political and social circumstances, very different from those prevailing in some other countries when they passed through a similar stage of their evolution.[6]

The problems arising from the 'unequal development' of countries where the industrial revolution is imposed on 'backward' communities, where the population is growing as fast as its expectations, where gigantic outlays for economic and social overheads (from roads and power-stations to schools and hospitals) are urgently needed and demanded, cannot be solved in the classical liberal way. On the other hand, state capitalism requires at the very least a high standard of government efficiency and capable civil servants—which are lacking in countries where corruption and nepotism are endemic and 'politics' are considered one of the most important industries. Nevertheless, the implantation of 'state capitalism' is not only favoured by all nationalists but frequently imposed even on those who by tradition and inclination favour liberal economic policies: President Alessandri in Chile, although a 'liberal', has been forced to go much further on the way towards 'state capitalism' than Frondizi in Argentina, who started with strong anti-liberal views.

Unfortunately, the Soviet authors are not interested in any serious investigation of these trends and necessities: 'state capitalism' is interesting and important for them only in so far as it is 'anti-imperialist', and they give warning against 'revisionist illusions' which may see in 'mixed economies' a way out of the difficulties, or may even consider it a step on the road towards socialism.

The chapter on 'State Capitalism' starts with a characteristic distinction between 'reactionary' and 'progressive' state capitalism. The first kind exists

> in countries like the USA, Japan, and Great Britain, where the state-monopolistic enterprises have grown on the basis of monopolies and try to use the state for their own selfish imperialist interests, especially for the realisation of an aggressive colonial policy.

This is certainly an original interpretation of British nationalised industries, but it does not

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[5] Lewis Hanke, *Modern Latin America* (New York, 1959), Vol. 1, p. 51.

[6] UN *International Cooperation in a Latin-American Development Policy*, 1954, p. 11.

help to distinguish the 'reactionary' from the 'progressive' kind, which the author thinks has come into being in Latin America from the contradiction between its backwardness and the necessities of national economic development. State capitalist measures are condemned not in those cases where they are 'inefficient', but only when and in so far as they have no anti-imperialist character. If serious analysis is missing, we are compensated with a lot of facts—some of which happen to be wrong. It is, for example, stated that the United States is so hostile to any state capitalist measures that it goes so far as to

> impose a total economic blockade on nationalised enterprises. One result of such a blockade is, for example, the difficult situation in Bolivia. The USA was in great part responsible for the catastrophic fall in tin prices (p. 98).

The truth is quite different: Bolivia's revolution depended and still depends on considerable United States aid, and the sums given are among the highest in the world in per capita terms. As for the fall in tin prices, let us quote the UN *Economic Survey for Latin America* for 1958 (p. 34):

> . . . the factors determining the deterioration of the tin market were . . . the steady decrease in consumption and the exports of one country (the Soviet Union) which, not being a member of the International agreement, was not subject to export restrictions and did not cooperate in the International Tin Council's stabilisation policy.

This indicates that it was Soviet dumping of tin that was important in the price fall, just as Soviet dumping of oil has become for Venezuela.

While American interests—and such institutions as the World Bank—are, indeed, wary about anti-liberal policies and nationalisation, it is untrue to say that loans to such enterprises have always been refused—as stated by one of our Soviet authors. At the beginning of 1959 the USA gave a loan of $72 million to the nationalised Mexican oil industry, to quote only one example.

WHAT about the Soviet view of the present stage of Latin American nationalism?

> The numerical growth of the working class, and the important part it plays in the political life of the Latin American countries, constitute the decisive factor in the development of national independence . . . The main characteristic of the contemporary freedom movements is the fact that the working class is beginning to lead them . . . The communist parties appear as the leading force of the national liberation movement in Latin America (I. pp. 323, 340 and 350).

The first is an exaggeration, the last is incorrect. The national movements continue to be led by 'bourgeois', while the urban industrial workers have, in many Latin American countries, obtained benefits which may in some cases impose a heavy burden on economic progress, while the unemployed and underemployed of town and country remain the stepchildren of progress. As to the communist parties, they are still rather weak, even in those countries where they are legal. The communist party of Chile, founded in 1922, and which was quite important during the 1930s, received less than 12 per cent of the vote in the 1961 elections.

In Venezuela, where according to one of the authors 'the communists have become very popular' (I. p. 283), the communist party got only 6·2 per cent in the elections of 1958. It is precisely the weakness of their appeal which explains why the communists have to resort to 'infiltration' as the road to power—as happened in Guatemala under Arbenz and is now happening in Cuba. It is this weakness of ideologies imported from abroad, and not the weakness of nationalist ideologies, which forces the communist parties to use camouflage, and which makes them the standard-bearers of 'Fidelismo'.[7]

Although most Latin Americans distrust foreign ideologies and dislike discipline, the

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[7] 'Fidelismo' turns out to be a very particular brand of 'national communism', with some characteristics of which the Khrushchevites are extremely critical and of which even the friends of Mao may not always approve. But to elaborate this would require a long analysis of the Cuban revolution.

prestige of the eastern bloc is growing, especially since the sputnik. The communists are helped by the traditions of anti-imperialism, by the historical distrust and dislike of the United States, as well as by the past policies of their northern neighbour. An exposition of the benefits of free enterprise is hardly designed to fill Latin Americans with enthusiasm, especially if it is accompanied by a re-assertion of the Monroe Doctrine, which for them is just a cloak for United States interests. For the newly awakening masses individual freedom is often meaningless and always less important than economic welfare, while for the young intellectuals it comes after the need for some ideology and the wish to play a leading part in the rapid modernisation of their countries. Representative democracy makes no particular appeal to those whose political rights have amounted to little more than the freedom to choose among representatives who would all oppress and cheat them. Communism is also advanced by the tendency in North America to see it everywhere, and to consider any nationalist, radical, and 'anti-capitalist' tendency as 'communistic'. Finally, it is helped by the fact that in most of these countries there exist no other well-organised left-wing forces, able to withstand communist infiltration and *basically* and in principle inimical to it.

If it were true that 'there can be no revolutionary action without revolutionary theory' (Lenin), then these two books need not disquiet us; they do their job badly. But Lenin's conception has been as much falsified as Marx' prophecies. Up to now we have seen only three independent 'socialist' revolutions: in Russia, in China, and in Cuba. All three countries were underdeveloped—and in each one of them politics took the leading role and transformed economics and society.

We have seen how 'socialism', supposedly the result of capitalist overmaturity, has in its totalitarian form become the means of rapid evolution for underdeveloped countries. Some of the Latin American countries are in an intermediate position—developed enough to be able to implant 'socialism' of this type, and undeveloped enough to need a short cut towards a modern economy. And today they can get political and economic help from the East, which makes such development easier.

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Interview with an Ex-Insider, III

FRIENDSHIP UNIVERSITY—THE EARLY VERSIONS

W. When you were working in the Comintern, you took part in a number of party schools, and served as an instructor. Can you tell us something about the origin and character of those schools?

P. You can only really understand the character of the Comintern training network if you take your mind back to the situation in the early twenties, when training work on a large scale first began. The efforts and hopes of the Communist International, in the first years after its foundation, were directed to bringing about the social revolution in the first place in a number of the most advanced countries of the world. Whatever may be said now, in retrospective explanation of communist activities in those years, anybody who took part in the communist movement at that time—and particularly those who were in close and direct touch with its leaders—was convinced, by analysis of what was happening in the world, and above all by the rise and expansion of the revolutionary labour movement in Europe, that the completion of 'the first stage of the world revolution, triumphantly opened by the October revolution in Russia in 1917', was a matter of the near future.

W. Were the Russian communists themselves convinced of this?

P. Yes, particularly the Russians. When I came to the Comintern Executive for the first time, late in 1924, after Lenin's death, I was at first astonished by the enthusiasm of the young Russian communists, members of the Komsomol who were dreaming of taking a direct part in 'the approaching revolutionary events in Europe', because it was frequently based on a most inadequate knowledge of affairs, and often revealed comical misunderstandings and exaggerations, but after a while I too, like most young visitors to the Comintern at that time, was caught up in the enthusiasm. A few years earlier—in the worst and most difficult years—the belief of the Russian communists in the 'world revolution' was still strong and widespread.

W. Would you say that was true of the leaders too?

P. Not really. The Comintern leaders—with Zinoviev and the Russian delegation at the top—realised even at that time, that is, about the middle twenties, that the 'first assault' of the revolution had failed, as shown in the defeat of the Red Army in Poland in 1920, the triumph of fascism in Italy in 1922, the collapse of the movement in Germany in 1923. They were aware at any rate, that the tempo of revolutionary development would slow down, that they had to reckon on setbacks, on the need to manoeuvre, and that new methods had to be worked out and revolutionary practice adapted to the new situation. A good deal of time was spent on a careful analysis of the revolutionary struggles of the post-war period, from 1918 to 1923, and they discovered that one of the most important reasons for the defeats in the various countries was the absence of the 'subjective factor', that is, of trained cadres of revolutionary fighters. Taken as a whole, it was said, the theory of world revolution worked out by the left wing of the Second International, above all by Lenin, during the 1914–18 war, had been shown to be correct. The world imperialist system was on the threshold of unavoidable collapse, was breaking down under its own contradictions. This basic theory was not invalidated by what happened during the post-war struggles in Germany, the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, or Italy.

W. Then how did they explain the defeats?

P. They attached great weight to the absence of well-prepared and well-trained communist parties, like the Bolshevik Party in Russia, which during the two revolutions of 1905 and 1917 prepared for the seizure of power by the proletariat in October, and which showed itself equal to its task when the revolutionary situation was at hand.

That was why, from the early twenties, the Comintern concentrated on creating cadres of militant trained communists, ready to put themselves at the head of the masses, and, when revolutionary situations again matured, able to follow in the footsteps of their Russian comrades and establish the proletarian dictatorship in their own countries.

W. And how did they set about this?

P. The model for all these training activities, which it was hoped would become an integral part of cadre preparations for all the Comintern parties, was—as in so much else—the experience of the bolsheviks. They recalled that even Lenin, in the years of reaction when the revolutionary wave had ebbed in Russia, organised Party Schools—the best known were in Paris and Capri—which turned out prominent revolutionaries, confirming the doctrine that ' without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice '. For the parties of the Comintern, the party schools were to do the same. Of course, they had first to decide where the schools were to be. A number of leaders of the different parties thought they should be organised in countries where the Communist Party was legal, if necessary subsidised by the Comintern Executive. The strongest argument against this proposal was that the communist parties in Europe, with the exception of Germany and France, were either illegal, as in Poland, Bulgaria, Italy, or insignificant in numbers, as in England, Belgium, or the Scandinavian countries. And in any case, neither in the Comintern nor in the parties did they believe in the durability of ' bourgeois legality '.

W. So that was how they came to choose Moscow?

P. Yes, they thought the communist cadres should not be at the mercy of arbitrary capitalist governments. There was another reason, too, for choosing Moscow. There was a shortage of instructors everywhere else, while in Moscow the Executive would be there to take charge. The Russian communists were deeply and honestly convinced that ' real Marxists ' capable of giving ' the foreign comrades ' an understanding of revolutionary theory and practice, were to be found only among the Russian bolsheviks. Also, having the Schools in Moscow made it easier to organise and finance them. It wasn't always easy in the twenties to get the necessary sums of money transferred abroad in foreign currency. And the final argument advanced was that by staying a year or more in Moscow the students would not only imbibe theoretical knowledge, but also get a practical insight into Soviet affairs and the methods of work which Soviet communists used. Without this practical knowledge, ' gray theory ' would have little value. And that's how it was. That's how the Comintern School network began to be set up in Moscow.

W. You talk of a school network. Wasn't it rather the case of one Central Comintern School, the so called Lenin School, designed to train leading party functionaries?

P. The Lenin School was only the chief Central School for party functionaries, particularly for those from the Western communist parties. But it wasn't by any means the only one. There were a number of others, from the end of the twenties until shortly before the outbreak of the second world war, where Comintern cadres, foreign communists, were trained.

W. Were all these schools started at the same time, and all run on the same lines? Or did they vary from one to another, according to the tasks each had to fulfil?

P. Rather more the second. But really the schools were always in a state of flux—sometimes being expanded, sometimes cut down, always changing. All these different reorganisations and improvements were more or less experimental, attempts to improve the work and to accumulate experience for the future. Although it was rarely stated openly, the organisers of the schools,

and the Comintern Executive, realised that the 'breathing space' in the revolutionary process, in the development of the social revolution, would be prolonged for years and decades, so that an enormous store of experience had to be gathered if suitable cadres were to be prepared. The number of candidates for the schools grew from year to year, and from more and more countries. That in itself was a reason for optimism about the future of the communist movement, even when there were few practical and political successes to record.

W. What were the important schools in the twenties and thirties, and what were the chief events in their history?

P. Well, the Lenin School was devoted mainly to training communist functionaries from the Western sections of the Comintern. Then in 1926 the Sun Yat-sen University was started, which was intended to train Chinese revolutionaries. This university was founded after the impetus given to the Chinese revolution by the events in Shanghai in 1925, and in accordance with the great significance which the Soviet Union attached to that revolution at the time when the prospects for revolution in Europe were not very hopeful. The tactics of the Central Committee of the Russian Party, and the Comintern Executive at the time were in favour of a common front with the Kuomintang, and so the University was intended not only for members of the Chinese communist party, but also for Kuomintang students. Karl Radek was appointed the first Rector—until the end of 1924 he had been head of the Eastern department of the Comintern, and specialised in Chinese affairs, and his extraordinary abilities as a propagandist would, it was hoped, have a good effect on the Chinese revolutionary cadres.

W. And what happened when Radek fell from grace?

P. The University had its best time while he was Rector. In 1926 and 1927 thousands of students came to Moscow from all parts of China, a comprehensive and detailed curriculum was drawn up, the best people were brought in to lecture, and enormous efforts made to get all the necessary material translated into Chinese. But very soon the University came to grief; its political foundations were shattered when the alliance between the Chinese party and the Kuomintang was broken in 1926–27. It turned out, in addition, that it was impossible to meet the enormous demands and difficulties created by the large numbers of students, language difficulties, etc. Then Radek was deposed, as being a danger to the party line if he continued to hold the position. It might have been hoped that, when he was appointed Rector of the Sun Yat-sen University, he would be diverted from his activities as one of the leaders of the Trotskyist opposition, but he was not, and the party leaders feared that a 'Trotskyist nucleus' would grow up around the person of the Rector. After he was dismissed the University stagnated for a while, but a large part of the students sent by the Kuomintang were recalled to China, and among the communist students who remained factional struggles broke out, reflecting the split which, at the end of the twenties, broke the Chinese Communist Party into a number of bitterly hostile fragments.

W. It wasn't from among the Sun Yat-sen University students that China's future leaders came, was it?

P. By no means. The real Chinese Communist Party Cadres, who in the next twenty years led their party through severe battles to victory, were not trained at the University, nor in Moscow at all. Neither Mao Tse-tung, nor Chu Teh nor Chou En-lai and their leading colleagues in communist China were Sun Yat-sen graduates. But a good many of the middle-ranking cadres had Moscow training.

W. Can you tell us about any other party schools in Moscow at that time which helped to train functionaries for the non-Soviet communist parties?

P. There were two that were important, the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (known as KUTV) named after Stalin, and a Communist University of the Peoples of the West, named after Markhlevski, a founder of the Polish C.P. At first these two universities, which were responsible to the

central committee of the Soviet party, were intended for the training of party cadres for the Soviet Union itself. They were modelled on the party high schools which had been set up in a number of cities at the end of the civil war and after—the best known of them, and the model for the rest, was the SVERDLOV party high school in Moscow. As for the KUTV, it became clear in the twenties that if the eastern republics of the Soviet Union were to be provided with competent cadres, a methodical course of training in Moscow, stretching over some years, was essential. But after the first steps had been taken it became obvious that what was needed was not superficial courses of instruction, but an enormous university, at which thousands and thousands of Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kazakhs, Turkmens and so on could get not only communist training, but also the elements of a general education, and be raised, so far as possible, to an intellectual level that would enable them to become in the future the decisive factor in the party organisation of the 'national republics', people who could not only be entrusted with the positions in the republican governments, but could also play a leading part in the economic, cultural, and social transformation of these backward areas.

W. When were its functions extended beyond the USSR?

P. It had been going for some years when it was suggested, and agreed, that it should have a special department for communists from non-Soviet eastern countries. This wasn't a simple job, for at that time the Comintern's contacts in most of the eastern countries were pretty slender. For some of the countries it was the job of the foreign department of the university not to get the students, but to establish the necessary contacts. In the second half of the twenties, and even more in the years 1930 to 1934, there was a marked expansion of the foreign department of the Eastern University. But when it became clear that the students from the underdeveloped Asian countries (and later also the Africans) required special, individual treatment, and that it was impossible for the university administration to organise the courses for the foreign students on the lines worked out for the Soviet Central Asian Republics, it was decided that, while remaining formally a part of the university, the foreign department should in fact be set up as a separate institute under the direction of the Comintern Executive and its relevant departments, where leading cadres for the Asian and African communist parties would be trained. Soon after the change was carried out, it was found advisable to separate the institutes physically, as well as administratively, from the Soviet sections of the university; in the thirties, then, there was this special 'Eastern' school as well as the Lenin school under Comintern auspices.

W. Was there a similar change in the Western University, in KUNZ?

P. That had its foreign sector too. The university was intended at first for internal Soviet needs; it was to train propagandists and organisers for work among the European national minorities of the USSR. Sections were started for White Russians, Poles, Germans, Jews, Karelo-Finns, and at the end of their course the students were sent to the corresponding communist party district and regional organisations. In the early thirties, the Comintern Executive, with the consent, naturally, of the Soviet central committee, to which KUNZ was responsible, began to send some students, scheduled to work in foreign communist parties but unable for one reason or another to attend the Lenin School, to the Western University, and the curriculum was expanded to include courses on Comintern questions and the work of communist parties abroad. These foreign groups grew steadily larger, and the Comintern supervised the curriculum and the general political training of these students who would eventually be placed at its disposal. By and large, the members of the German, Polish, Rumanian and other communist parties who attended the Western University thought it practically almost as good for the training of leading party cadres as the International Lenin School, which trained the top party people.

W. Do you think they were right? Was there no significant difference in the treatment and qualifications of the Lenin School students and those at the KUTV and KUNZ? Or was the selection of students dictated by deeper political considerations?

P. Originally, the Lenin School was intended to be the highest type of teaching institution, turning out top-ranking party leaders, including central committee secretaries. But in fact it turned out that the communist parties were not always inclined to send their best people there, and also a number of high party officials who were very good at their job were quite unsatisfactory as students. On examination it often turned out that a student whose record in practical work was far from outstanding, came out much better than his colleagues, who had been recommended for the Lenin School, although he had been considered suitable 'only' for the KUNZ.

W. Was the same thing true of the KUTV students?

P. In the thirties particularly, the KUTV was one place where most of the leaders of the young communist parties of the East were trained. There were Indo-Chinese communists there who later became Ho Chi Minh's principal assistants in fighting the French and establishing North Vietnam, and Indonesians who later worked with Aidit (some of them still do), and there were also many Indian communists. On the other hand there were, in all the schools, including the Lenin School, many students who turned out unsatisfactory for the Comintern. Every year there were some who had to be dismissed from the university as unsatisfactory, and some—which was still worse—who, instead of absorbing communist theory and returning to practical work in their own countries, turned their backs on the communist party. Several of them became bitter enemies of communism, some joined the socialist party, others went over to the fascists, and a few co-operated with the police who, in many countries in the thirties, specialised in the fight against communism. This made it easier for the Comintern to attack those who had been found unreceptive to communist theory as taught in these universities; no sooner had they made a critical remark than they were denounced as police spies. In most cases it was alleged that they had been specially sent to Moscow on intelligence missions. Not only were they isolated, but the authorities did their best to see that they were rendered harmless for the future.

W. That couldn't have made for a very happy atmosphere?

P. No, indeed not. Just when the Comintern schools were at their largest, and when a good deal of experience had been gained in training and teaching methods, the atmosphere became very tense, and instruction was interrupted and destroyed by mutual suspicions and mistrust among the students, who kept each other under observation.

W. What do you think was the real reason for the crises which shook all the Comintern schools in the thirties, so that all of them had to be closed down?

P. The same reasons that accounted for the crisis in the communist movement as a whole. Instruction became more and more schematic and dogmatic, the possibility of freely discussing the lectures grew narrower and narrower, until it disappeared altogether. When the least doubt or question was immediately condemned as the sign of a heresy endangering the party, and the student—who in many cases had come from an illegal party, had already made great sacrifices in its behalf, sometimes many years of imprisonment, of ill-treatment in Nazi concentration camps, etc.—for some scarcely expressed hesitation might be suspected by his instructor or one of his fellow students of being a 'fascist agent' or a 'spy' or a 'police provocateur', there was bound to be a reaction.

W. What could the students do about it?

P. Some of them just gave up studying, though that wasn't easy; it was usually followed by expulsion from the party, which in the thirties could and often did lead to arrest, exile, and even execution; others passively adapted themselves to all the requirements. What developed was a kind of selective breeding of the particularly tenacious and 'faceless' bureaucrats, who later joined the

'apparatus' of the *gleichgeschaltet* parties and who were prepared to carry out any manoeuvre if ordered 'from above'. It is true there was a third, if smaller, category. These were the students who were clever and cynical enough to understand the game and were prepared to base their career on hypocrisy and submission. I have met some of these graduates of the Comintern Universities again after an interval of 25 to 30 years. They survived every wave of terror untouched, rose from post to post in the party apparatus, spent the war years safely behind the lines, and are now well placed in the hierarchies of the 'people's democracies'. Now, as then, all the high-sounding oratory of communist propaganda comes easily to their lips; they shrug their shoulders pityingly for the comrades who 'stuck their necks out' prematurely and were shot or tortured to death in the camps. And if, now as before, they are still strangers to idealism and to the belief in making the world a better place, they remain faithful to the party line and the party leaders of the moment ('at the given stage'—*na dannom etape*—they say with a smile, recalling the technical jargon of the Lenin school) and, now as then, are filled with hatred for the enemy and of contempt for the renegade. (Incidentally—although it is hardly relevant here—they have, of course, 'nothing against Khrushchev', but 'his speech against Stalin did too much harm'.)

W. To finish off the story, can you tell us anything about the party schools in the second half of the thirties, and what happened when war broke out?

P. At that time I was no longer in Moscow, but I got some idea from people I met, some of them from the teaching staff, others students. In the years between the great wave of terror which began in 1936 and up to the eighteenth CPSU congress in 1939—the so-called Yezhov era—the entire Comintern apparatus, the foreign communist party leaders who were in Moscow, and, of course, the Comintern School network, suffered havoc. In the Lenin schools, as in the KUNZ and KUTV, the all-powerful body was the cadres division or the secret department, which were ruled at will by plenipotentiaries of the NKVD. Before a student or teacher who uttered an unwary remark came under suspicion, but now, in 1936–37, *everybody* was suspect. Entire classes of students suddenly disappeared—that happened, for example, to the Polish, Bulgarian, and Hungarian sectors of the Western University, while the German sector at the Lenin school, the Persian and Korean sectors at the Eastern University were decimated.

The professors didn't get off any better. Quite often, when a professor was arrested, his successor, appointed by the party committee, would soon fall under suspicion and also be arrested. The heads of the universities were constantly being changed. The Latvian communist Soms, who was rector of the Lenin School, was arrested as 'an enemy of the people'. (Kirsanova, an old-guard Bolshevik, was protected by her husband Yaroslavsky, head of the central commission.) Reiter, rector of the KUTV, was arrested and never returned. E. Frumkina, at one time an outstanding leader of the Menshevik Bund, whom Lenin brought into the communist party in 1919, and who became rector of KUNZ, was dismissed in 1937, then arrested, severely tortured under examination, and finally given a long sentence, during which she died. After Stalin's death both were posthumously rehabilitated.

The formal end of the Communist International universities came with the self-dissolution of their parent body in May 1943. But International party schools of various kinds continued to exist in the Soviet Union throughout the war, and with the same purpose as the universities—to train cadres for the various communist parties. They started where the universities had left off: the students were given instruction in party dogma, trained in the appreciation of party tactics, and taught that their job was to carry out the party line.

If ever an authentic history of the Communist International is written and of the means by which it spread its creed, a substantial place will have to be given to the party school network.

STAGES OF SOVIET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT *

Naum Jasny

IT would be difficult to find any other period of economic history so subject to change as the history of the Soviet economy. The 43 years it covers include precipitous falls in output caused by two major wars, phases of very high rates of growth, phases of stagnation, and even phases of decline—one at least in peacetime. Average rates of growth calculated for the whole period since 1913—or 1917—are of limited value in regard to estimating future trends, for there is no reason to assume that they allow reliable conclusions to be drawn as to what will happen next. This reservation is also valid in regard to calculations for the shorter periods starting from 1928, 1937, or 1940, and extending up to the present.

The early history of the Soviet economy was one of war and of an attempt at introducing communism almost overnight (the period of so-called War Communism), the combined effect of which was to reduce industry and transport almost to a standstill, to bring about an immense drop in farm output, and to lead to a widespread famine which reached its climax in the winter of 1921–22. It took six years—the period of NEP, the New Economic Policy—just to regain the 1913 level of output. But even after that had been reached, development was far from uniform. On the contrary, vast differences can be found between the various stages, and distinguishing these is of paramount significance for an understanding of what really went on. But one feature binds all the stages together, making of them the Great Industrialisation Drive which may be regarded as still in progress.

In dealing with Soviet economic history after the 1913 level was restored, it is customary in the West to adopt the Soviet practice of using the FYP (five-year plan) periods as the basic subdivisions of the economic history of the USSR since 1928. This is done on the assumption that the Soviet economy is a planned economy, and that the FYPs were, and the SYP (seven-year plan) now is, the foundation of all planning. In official Soviet writings, the time since the first FYP began to operate is the era of the FYPs. In actual fact, however, the FYPs served primarily propaganda purposes. The subdivisions into FYP periods not only does not help to reveal the true developments, but is one means of concealing them. The use of this official Soviet device by Western analysts should be abandoned. It suffices to give a thought to the fact that in the 18 years 1941 through 1958, an approved FYP operated only during $4\frac{3}{4}$ years (the 4th FYP), but even this was not a completed plan. The greatest harm to research from the use of the subdivisions into FYP periods is done, however, when the FYP periods are employed as stages of Soviet economic development for the time *before* the second world war, when FYPs were more continuous. Even then, the intervals between (20·5 months between the 1st and 2nd FYP, and 15 months between the 2nd and 3rd FYP) were long enough. Much more important than the absence of approved FYPs or the great gaps between one approved plan and the next is the fact that the FYPs were one thing and the reality largely another. This defect—it was not the only one—was particularly pronounced in the FYPs prior to the second world war, but not because that was an earlier period. The FYPs were closer to reality in periods favourable for the Soviets, and the period since the second world war has been more favourable for the USSR than the period

* This essay forms part of the introduction to a book devoted to the post-Stalin economy, which will serve as a sequel to the author's *Soviet Industrialization 1928–52* (Chicago University Press, 1961).

before that war. The measure introduced in December 1960, and discussed at the end of this essay, may be regarded as official recognition that the FYPs never operated properly, possibly did not operate at all. In so far as planning really did operate, this was true primarily only of the annual plans.

In keeping with the theory that the FYPs are the guides of Soviet economic development, the year 1928–29 (for which the calendar year 1929 is frequently substituted) is used as the starting point (with 1927–28 or 1928 as the basis of comparison). But since we reject the subdivision into FYP periods, and deal instead with the Industrialisation Drive as the period after the pre-World War I output level was by and large regained, it seems advisable to take as the start of the whole period of industrialisation not 1929 or 1928–29, but December 1927, when the XV Party Congress proclaimed the acceleration of industrialisation, and the exertion of greater pressure on the *kulaks* (more affluent peasants), which was why the Bolsheviks themselves baptised it 'The Congress of Industrialisation'. Its decisions were the pivotal event in the transition from NEP to the Great Industrialisation Drive.

INSTEAD of the subdivision into FYP periods, a subdivision into the following six stages is suggested for the entire period after the end of the New Economic Policy:

1. The Warming-Up period, 1928 through 1929.
2. The All-Out-Drive period, 1930 through 1932.
3. The Three Good Years, 1934 through 1936.
4. The Purge Era, 1937 through 1940.
5. The Stalin-Has-Everything-His-Way period, 1946 through 1952.
6. The Post-Stalin period, starting in 1953.[1]

The first five stages taken together compose the Stalin period of the Great Industrialisation Drive. The subdivision into Stalin and post-Stalin periods seems natural, in spite of the fact that the later period preserved, especially in the first years, many important features of the Stalin era. (For a discussion of the first five stages readers are referred to *Soviet Industrialisation 1928–52*).

The post-Stalin period is not formally subdivided into stages, but this may be wrong. An important distinction needs to be made between the period from Stalin's death to December 1956, when the deep freeze under Stalin was being slowly converted into simple freeze, and the later period of actual defrosting. The difference between these two periods will be seen to be quite marked, once attention has been drawn to it.

The great differences between the different stages (except for the Stalin post-war and the post-Stalin periods) in regard to rates of growth are probably the most important feature of the subdivision; they are so large as to show up, though naturally with reduced force, even in comparisons of periods which represent partial agglomerations of different stages of the main subdivisions. In this connection considerable

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[1] The year 1933 is omitted because of its intermediate nature. This subdivision was first suggested in 'Soviet Economic Growth', *Social Research*, Spring 1954. It was used also in the author's subsequent publications, but with less emphasis than it deserved. It underlies the analysis in *Soviet Industrialisation 1928–52*. The writer sincerely hopes that it will be accepted as basic by colleagues working in the field. There are two difficulties in any subdivision. The first is that the nature of the data used compels one to deal only with whole, mainly calendar, years. Secondly, while policies may change, on some occasions quite abruptly, their effects on the economy may not be strongly reflected before some time. Thus the Warming-Up Period is believed to have ended with Stalin's eventful article, 'The Year of the Great Turn' (*Pravda*, 7 November 1929), but in our presentation the whole year of 1929 is included in the period. The *full* impact on production of the All-Out-Drive period, which is assumed to have started on 7 November 1929, was not felt before 1931. While the guiding policies of the All-Out-Drive period were discontinued in January 1933, their destructive effect continued strong until the realisation of the 1933 crops. In a similar manner the Great Purges and their effects must by necessity be squeezed into the four calendar years 1937 through 1940, and Stalin-Has-Everything-His-Way period ends with the end of the calendar year 1952. In *Soviet Industrialisation 1928–52*, discussion of the Drive starts with December 1927, while the statistical analysis begins with October 1928, since all Soviet statistics, and those produced in the West, are arranged in this way, and it would be difficult for an individual writer working on his own to make all the necessary recalculations.

significance must be assigned to a comparison to rates of growth before and after the second world war.

Rates of growth are central also to a further necessary subdivision in the analysis of economic development, for part of the post-second world war period. This concerns (a) the period of the great accumulation of unfinished constructions, which meant that capacities were coming into operation inadequately; and (b) the period of a slowdown in economic growth caused by that accumulation, as shown in the data for 1956 through 1958.[2] For comparison with this period the data for period (a), the five years 1951 through 1955, are used. The decline in rates of growth caused by the inadequate addition of capacities was not very large (perhaps 20 per cent for industry in 1957 and 1958; possibly somewhat less). There were in addition heavy losses from changes in construction plans, and the complete abandonment of projects at various stages of completion. It is immensely significant that all this mismanagement could have happened in an economy proclaimed *urbi et orbi* as one which develops smoothly and proportionately according to plan, and in a sphere completely controlled by the state. It is in fact difficult to understand how such obvious blunders that might, it would seem, easily have been prevented, could have gone on for six years or so, before serious attention was paid to them. And even then serious attention was paid only when the harmful results stared out of the indices for industrial production.

Rates of growth before and after the Second World War

AS STATED, the great variations in the rates of growth of the Soviet economy may be considered the most relevant feature of the suggested subdivision into stages. From this point of view, the subdivision into Stalin post-second world war and post-Stalin periods lacks significance; the rates of growth in the post-Stalin period do not differ substantially from those in the Stalin post-second world war period, in which part of the growth represents recovery from the decline brought about by the war; but, together, the two differ significantly from the decade before the war, taken as a whole.[3] The 1930s were the period in which Stalin's vicious economic policies caused most harm, and it was their disastrous effects that give the 1930s their distinctive character. The distinction between the two decades would be very important, even if there were no confusion on this score.[4]

National income, which grew by about 60 per cent during the 1930s, increased by about 90 per cent in 1945–50, the recovery period, and again by perhaps 115 per cent during the 1950s.[5] Industrial production increased by about 100 per cent in the 1930s.[6] It about

[2] For the time being it is assumed that the decline caused by this factor lasted for three years, but possibly, when more evidence is available, it will prove advisable to add 1959 to these three years.

[3] The pre-war period usually dealt with is the eleven years 1929 to 1940, or the 11¼ years from 1928–29 to 1940. But at first (for about a year) it was recovery from the first world war rather than growth, if, following Bazarov, capacity rather than output is taken as the deciding factor (see V. A. Bazarov in the discussion of 'Methodology of the General Plan' in *Planovoe Khoziaistvo*, 1928, 6, pp. 151–54). The good crops of 1930 also modified the full impact of the All Out Drive, which for these reasons did not become fully effective before 1931.

[4] Professor Berliner (*Soviet Economic Aid*, pp. 129–30) says that the rates of industrial growth in the early fifties were distinctly less than in the pre-war period. His analysis was based on comparisons of the moderately exaggerated official indices for the early fifties with the greatly exaggerated official indices for the 1930s.

[5] The separation of the periods 1945–50 and 1950–60 is needed because the earlier period was one of recovery with particularly high rates of growth.

[6] Calculations of Demitri Shimkin and Frederick Leedy for total industrial production (*Automotive Industries*, 1 January 1958) indicate a growth of about 120 per cent in the 1930s. But for 1940 their calculations probably included the output of the annexed territories and hence the index needs a downward adjustment. Calculations of Norman Kaplan and Richard Moorsteen ('An Index of Soviet Industrial Output', *The American Economic Review*, June 1960), imply an increase of less than 100 per cent for the same period, but an upward adjustment is needed for the output of armaments which expanded greatly during that period and was not considered by the authors, and hence total production increased more than the civilian output alone. The upward adjustment needed for this factor is likely to be much larger than the downward adjustment for the Shimkin and Leedy index.

doubled in 1945–50,[7] after having declined substantially during the war. Industrial expansion in the 1950s well exceeded 100 per cent.[8] Even if the rise in industrial output in the 1950s was not greater than the rise in the 1930s, the much larger output level from which the growth in the 1950s started cannot be ignored. Freight traffic, which *ceteris paribus* would have shown a notably smaller rise in the 1950s than the 1930s (the great decline in the number of horses and the rapid commercialisation of consumption in the earlier period), grew more in the later decade.[9] The increase of roughly 10 per cent shown by the statistics, plus the effect of factors tending to additional expansion in the 1930s, add up to a quite substantial figure.

The differences between the 1930s and the 1950s in the rates of growth of national income, industrial output, and freight traffic, are far outstripped by the differences in the rates of growth of farm output and personal incomes. With respect to the two latter categories, the two decades clearly belong in different classes. Gross farm output, which increased only a few per cent in the 1930s, expanded by about 55 per cent in the 1950s (official data). But the greatest differences between the two periods were in real incomes. There was a precipitous decline of immense proportions in real wages and real incomes of the peasants in the 1930s, whereas these items increased by perhaps 70 and 80 per cent respectively in the 1950s.[10] The differences between rates of growth in the 1930s and 1950s are implicit in the annual make-up of the two decades. For the 1950s each year was at worst a not quite satisfactory year, and most of them were highly satisfactory. As for rates of growth in the 1930s, however, two years, the last two of the All Out Drive (1931 and 1932) were near catastrophic; two (1933 and 1937) were mediocre; three years (1934–36) were good; the decade ended with near stagnation during the last three years of the Purge Era (1938 through 1940).

Analysis of the data shows that the differences between the two decades in the year-by-year rates of growth appear particularly marked in some of those very items (industrial output, freight traffic) where comparison of the decades as a whole reveals less striking differences.

The initial defrosting

EARLY IN 1957 there was talk in the United States of economic de-Stalinisation, of a kind of economic thaw having started in the USSR after Stalin's death.[11] The idea was taken from the development in literature, but the timing of the thaw was quite different in the economy; in literature it reached its peak in 1956, but at that time the thaw was only starting in earnest in economic thought and economic action. (The reason is obvious. In literature the thaw depended on personal action; the rulers had only to suffer it. In the economy the rulers themselves had to act.) This difference in timing between literature and the economy is very important and should be carefully considered in dealing with the post-Stalin economy.

The transition in the economy from the state of affairs at the end of Stalin's days to that which existed at the end of 1960 did not proceed in a straight line. The development in the economy seems indeed to have resembled that observed in nature. In the defrosting of something kept in deep freeze (and economic thought and initiative were in a state of deep freeze under Stalin) the start is particularly slow. Some considerable time may pass before

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[7] Kaplan and Moorsteen have a near trebling in this period, but a large discount is needed for the great drop in output of armaments, not considered in their index for those years.

[8] Kaplan and Moorsteen have an increase of 102·3 per cent in 1950–58, implying a growth of about 140 per cent in the whole decade, but the figure needs a downward adjustment for the probably smaller rise in armaments production than in total industrial production in this period. Shimkin-Leedy's calculations, which do not need such an adjustment, nevertheless run higher than the Kaplan-Moorsteen index for the years until 1956, the period they cover.

[9] The increase was equivalent to 126 per cent in the 1930s and to about 140 in the 1950s (tons originated on railways adjusted for the change in the share of railways in freight traffic by all carriers other than animal power in ton-kilometers).

[10] The rises are given officially as 62 and 86 per cent for 1950–59 in *Economy USSR in 1959*, p. 84.

[11] See, for example, A. Nove, 'Problems of Economic De-Stalinisation', and Gregory Grossman, 'Economic Rationalism and Political "Thaw"', both in *Problems of Communism*, March-April 1957.

the temperature of the item involved goes up to the point when actual thawing starts. During this preliminary period deep freeze is converted into simple freeze. There are sound reasons for believing that in economic thought the actual thawing did not start in earnest before the end of 1956, that is, after almost four years had passed since Stalin's death. It can be argued with considerable justification that little happened in the economy in that time; the greater events occurred in 1957 and 1958. Even if more importance is assigned to the happenings from 1953 through 1956 than is done here, the need for a distinction still stands. Whatever changes did occur in the first four years required little thought or initiative, and the few good intentions that were put into effect were in part executed in a more or less nonsensical manner.

In spite of the incessant boasting about the 'immeasurable' advantages of a planned socialised economy, the version of this economy as it existed under Stalin in his last years was characterised by an enormously large amount of irrationality and inefficiency.[12] A highly disorganised price system, the result of neglecting to charge for use of capital, insufficient depreciation charges, indifference to production costs in setting prices for some important commodities, and sheer incapacity, not to speak of disregard for the value of the goods to the consumers (private and state), all played a large part among the factors leading to irrationality and inefficiency. Setting unfulfillable targets, undertaking obviously irrational projects in deference to a senseless dogma or simply for the glorification of the regime and its rulers, were further causes of inefficiency. Last but not least, came the adverse effects of super-centralisation, of dictatorial bureaucracy in general, and specifically and simply of the ignorance of those making the decisions and their disregard of the advice of those with knowledge.[13]

It would be incorrect to say that nothing happened during the period of initial defrosting in the way of diminishing the immense irrationalities and inefficiencies inherited from Stalin's time, but what was done was minute compared with the need. As far as this writer can tell, there were only two important actions in a positive direction, and in both cases the need had been known long before and was well within the understanding of Malenkov and Khrushchev. The limited range of positive action during the initial defrosting stands out even more clearly in comparison with what happened in the later phase, which made far greater demands on intelligence and ability.

The two positive changes during initial defrosting concerned agriculture and expenditure on the armed forces.

THE basic factor separating the post-Stalin from the Stalin era is the change from drastic exploitation of agriculture to a more sensible attitude. The first steps in this direction were announced as early as August 1953 in a report by Malenkov, but the measures taken were neither radical nor sensible. Those in power seemed quite uncertain about how to approach the problem. The margins between the prices paid to the farm producers on purchases and those paid to them on compulsory deliveries (an entirely artificial and economically unhealthy division) were never so wide, so absurdly wide (14-fold in sunflower seed for example), as during the time when the deep freeze was becoming simple freeze.

It is impossible to assess accurately the significance of the changes in expenditure on the armed forces, because the extent of the changes is not known. If this writer's assumption is correct, that after 1952 this expenditure rose much less than national income, then in one sense there was a large saving which permitted the observed substantial rises in the real incomes of the peasants, and the maintenance and even expansion of the high rate of growth of investment. Although the increases in peasant incomes—and for that matter in industrial workers' incomes—were very far from adequate, the economy was nevertheless becoming healthier.

Reduction of the working day from eight to seven hours (six hours for underground and

[12] Irrationality is in fact a form of inefficiency.
[13] For details see N. J., 'Rationality and Efficiency in the Soviet Economy', *Soviet Studies*, April and July 1961.

some other heavy work) was part of the Directives on the 6th FYP adopted in February 1956. This should have been assigned considerable significance had it not been the outcome of pure demagogy. The measure was not in the draft presented to the CPSU Congress for consideration. Its inclusion in the Directives was a spontaneous action at the Congress, and it was therefore not built into the general framework of the economy as visualised in the Directives. Almost nothing happened in fulfilment of this promise in the first $3\frac{3}{4}$ years of the five-year period.

Officially, decentralisation began with the May 1955 order on the decentralisation of management in agriculture, but the modest measures prescribed were accompanied by a strong reinforcement of the control exercised by the strictly centralised party, and the regulations under the order were not adhered to either, so that this measure must definitely be classed as minor.

The decline in the rates of growth in 1956–58 has already been mentioned, but merits a little more attention. The plan known as 'Stalin is Changing the Climate of Russia', a piece of charlatanism on a gigantic scale, showed in whose hands was planning in Stalin's last years and what might be expected of it. Since too many investment projects were started, an insufficient number were completed, leading ultimately to a slowing down in the growth of the economy. The 'Five Great Stalin Constructions of Communism' projects, approved in the second half of 1950, were probably the first large investment schemes which started the harmful period of too many projects in process of construction. For the present analysis it is important that the phenomenon not only was not arrested after Stalin's death, but was probably much intensified, and in any case continued unhampered until its adverse effect in the form of reduced rates of growth became apparent in 1956, i.e., in the period of initial defrosting. It may have been precisely these reduced rates of growth which were the principal reason why the stage of conversion from deep to simple freeze was replaced in December 1956 by the stage of actual melting, the second phase of the post-Stalin period.

The splitting of the Gosplan USSR into two agencies, one taking care of the perspective (FYP and longer) plans, and the other working on current (annual and shorter) plans, a measure ordered in May 1955, can be classed with assurance as the height of absurdity in the history of an institution full of absurdities (yet the splitting was repeated in 1960, as will be shown). The very bottom in FYP planning, from its initiation in 1928–29, was reached in the Directives on the 5th FYP, approved by the XIXth Party Congress in October 1952, that is, a few months before Stalin's death. Intensive scrutiny is needed to discover serious improvements in its successor, the Directives on the 6th FYP approved in February 1956, which on the whole displayed the same absence of thought, the same fear of everything new and not so new. There is hardly anything in the Directives on the 6th FYP which might not have been found in them if the Stalin era had continued through 1956.

A particularly pronounced example of thoughtlessness on the lowest level (the splitting of Gosplan in 1955 may be considered an example of thoughtlessness on a higher level) in this period was the manner in which the reduction of retail prices of consumer goods, effective 1 April 1953, was arranged. Such reductions had then been taking place annually since 1949. The wish to make the 1953 reductions large was natural. One does not, however, need to study economics to understand that halving the retail prices of potatoes, vegetables, and fruit, which were in particularly short supply (potatoes and vegetables) or almost non-existent (fruit) was not the proper way to handle economic problems. Nor can the benevolence of the population—the aim of the measure—be attained in this way. Clearly, membership of Stalin's closest entourage was a poor school for leadership in the economic field. Khrushchev of 1960 was not the Khrushchev of 1953.

The thaw

THERE SEEMS sufficient reason to consider December 1956 as the end of the initial defrosting. The decisions of the plenary session of the Central Committee held in December of

that year, entitled 'On Completion of Work on the 6th FYP and on Instructions for making the Control Figures for 1956–60 and the National Economic Plan for 1957 More Exact', and 'Problems of Improving the Direction of the National Economy',[14] represented a serious attempt to stop the drift, although measures were included which had to be hastily revoked. The first of the two decisions proclaimed the end of 'hurrah planning' and its replacement by realist planning. This laid the groundwork for the premature end of the 6th FYP (the Party Directives on this FYP were finally discarded several months later and work on the plan was discontinued entirely, and work on the seven-year plan 1959–65 was begun). Inter alia, the turn to realistic planning removed the chief obstacle to the establishment of a closer connection between perspective and short range planning and to that elasticity which is indispensable for good planning and for efficient direction of the economy.

Attention was at last given in December 1956 to the excessive accumulation of unfinished constructions, which had by then reached such proportions that a few years were needed to remedy the situation. (By the end of 1960 it was still not possible to ascertain whether order had been fully restored in this respect). Little credit is due on this score, for the adverse effects were apparent in the reduced rates of growth, and an intelligent leadership would have grasped the significance of earlier signs.

The central committee plenary session of December 1956 also realised the need for decentralisation, but at first it was apparently thought that this could be put through by enlarging the powers of the Union Ministries (almost all these Ministries were completely abolished a few weeks later). The division of planning work between two organisations was not only retained but even accentuated by an expansion of the powers of the organisation in charge of short-range planning.

The slowing down in the rate of industrial growth emerged from the report on the operation of the economy for the first half of 1956, which was published in July. If it is correct to assume that the evidence of this slowdown was largely instrumental in prompting the decisions of the December 1956 central committee session, the same reasoning may apply to some other actions taken by the Moscow government about that time. One such action was the decision of 8 September 1956 on minimum wages.

From the pre-revolutionary era the Soviets had inherited a highly stratified wage structure. The stratification was natural in a poor, backward agricultural country, but it became less and less suitable as the country was rapidly industrialised. Yet the stratification of wages was not only not reduced but possibly even intensified during the Stalin era. Then, by decree of 8 September 1956, a minimum wage was introduced, effective from 1 January 1957. The established minimum wage represented only about 40 per cent of the average nominal wage in that year. Nevertheless, the measure was a significant one, although *Planovoe Khoziaistvo*, the Gosplan journal, did not feel the occasion sufficiently important to devote to the decree an editorial or an article The introduction of the minimum wage, important as it was, can hardly compete with the December 1956 decisions as the pivotal date in the transition from freeze to thaw.

The short interval of less than two years between the Central Committee session of 20–24 December 1956, and the announcement on 14 November 1958, of the draft of the Control Figures for 1959–65, was one of feverish activity in decision-making There was good reason for haste. The accumulation of thirty years of irrationality and inefficiency was to be at least partly removed. Khrushchev's own temperament here coincided with the wishes of those informed persons whose activities had for years, in some cases for decades, been paralysed. Conditions under Stalin had made it impossible for them even to hint at what should be done.

Decisions were rushed like baked bread from an oven. A problem came up, was subjected to brief consideration, and a decision reached. The enlarged Central Committee was summoned by telegraph, approved the decision after listening to a many-hours oration by

[14] *Pravda*, 25 December 1956.

Khrushchev and a brief subsequent discussion. A few weeks were allowed for tens of millions to approve the new measure unanimously at thousands of meetings, and the decision became binding; it had in fact been put into operation before these final steps.

It may be argued that almost all these feverish decisions were made for the benefit of the SYP then in preparation. This is of course true. But there was no trace of fever during the preparation of the Directives on the 6th FYP; temperatures did not rise even one degree. Few knew before the publication of the draft of the Directives that anything of the kind was in progress.

What has been said of feverish haste after December 1956 applies with particular force to decentralisation, one of the most difficult problems dealt with. By 10 May 1957, the relatively far-reaching 'Law on Further Improving the Organisation of Management of Industry and Construction' was enacted, converting a structure based on the vertical principle (ministries for each branch of industry) into one based on the horizontal or territorial principle (*sovnarkhozy*, regional councils of national economy), after it had been acclaimed in the manner described above (thousands of meetings with tens of millions of participants. No-one tried to vote against!). In addition to decentralisation of industry and construction, the law contained provisions for the organisation of planning. The two parts of Gosplan were re-united and, although this was not clearly stated, planning work was to be to some extent decentralised too.

The haste with which the decentralisation of industry and construction was carried through was due to the part played by this problem in the factional squabble then in the political foreground. But the other measures decided upon in the short period of less than two years were also pressed through almost in fire-alarm fashion. Here are the most important of them:

(a) Expansion of housing construction (decree of Central Committee of the party and USSR Council of Ministers of 31 July 1957);

(b) Abolition of the MTS and transfer of farm machinery to the kolkhozy and establishment of uniform prices for farm products delivered to the state by the kolkhozy (mainly decisions of the Central Committee, 17–18 June 1958).

(c) Decisive shift from coal to petroleum and gas (this decision was probably reached in three steps);

(d) Accelerated development of output of plastics, including artificial fibres (Central Committee plenary session, 6–7 May 1958);

(e) Serious steps to bring order into the greatly disorganised wage structure; and, last but not least, perhaps indeed first, considering the place it occupied in Lenin's schemes:

(f) Dethronement of hydroelectric power and a revised attitude to electric power in general (announced by Khrushchev on 10 August 1958), with some but quite inadequate repercussions on the appraisal of the advantages of utilisation of electric power, as in the competition of electric with diesel traction on railways.

This list omits decisions of lesser importance, as well as the great Khrushchev bluff to overtake the United States in per capita production of meat and milk by 1960 or at the latest by 1961–62 (for the first announcement see *Pravda*, 24 May 1957).

ALL the changes enumerated above found their way into the SYP for 1959–65, to its considerable advantage. Specifically the savings on investment effected through the shift from hydroelectric to thermal power stations, and through other changes, permitted such growth-stimulating measures as the great increase in investments in the chemical industry. The shift to much cheaper fuels makes possible great savings in fuel costs for the state-owned enterprises, and so on.

The defrosting after December 1956 was very clearly reflected in scholarly work as well. There was a veritable rush to hold scientific conferences which, on this scale and frequency, had been unknown for many years; only a few of these will be mentioned here.

On 4–8 June 1957 an All-Union Conference of Statisticians was held.[15] The well-known

[15] The stenographic report of almost 700 pages, was published by the Central Statistical Office under the title *Vsesoyuznoe Soveshchanie Statistikov* (Moscow, 1959).

professor of statistics A. Boyarski said (p. 52) that the conference had been convened in a 'holiday sentiment' not only because 'we are meeting in such force for the first time in many years', but also because 'we are on the threshold of a new stage of statistical development'.

This conference followed directly upon an important conference, likewise with broad participation, on the law of value and its utilisation, arranged by the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.[16]

An All-Union Conference on Economic Effectiveness of Capital Investments and New Techniques took place, with more than 800 participants, in June 1958. The editors in their preface emphasised that 'the discussion at the conference was broad and free'.[17] Equally deserving of mention was the conference on differential rent under socialism arranged by Moscow University in September 1958.[18]

These conferences, it will be seen, were all concentrated in the short space of less than two years.

Though marking real progress, discussion at these conferences was striking only as compared with the situation under Stalin. There was little new in the idea expounded by Khrushchev in his oration of 10 August 1958, that the greater investment in, and the longer construction time of, hydroelectric power installations as compared with thermal power plants must be given consideration in selecting the type of construction. Yet at the conference on investment it was the mere idea that the size of investment should be given consideration that was central in the discussion, rather than the methods of ensuring effectiveness.

Consistently pursued, the idea that differences in investment must be taken into consideration leads to recognition of interest on capital as part of production costs. While the Soviets are proceeding towards recognition of this principle, which has been taboo since the Revolution, doctrinal considerations still prevent consistency and speed.

Doctrinal inhibitions were also prominent in the discussion at the conference devoted to land rent. There it was 'hotly' debated whether differences in soil and climate affect labour productivity and agricultural output in a socialist state. Victory went to the less doctrinaire, who acknowledged 'the fact that agricultural enterprise in our country has operated and is operating on lands of differing fertility, and that the natural conditions materially affect labour productivity' (op. cit., pp. 7–8). Great importance was assigned at this conference to the purely formal difference between differential rent and differential income. Much in the discussion of the problems connected with the law of value, as it has been carried on in the USSR recently, also seems odd to a Westerner.[19]

The 'holiday atmosphere' in which, according to Boyarski, the statistical conference proceeded, was apparently not disturbed by the fact that Starovski, Stalin's organiser of fabricated statistics, was to remain at the helm of the Central Statistical Office. His creations, such as the famous industrial indices in 'unchangeable 1926–27 prices', remained in obligatory use at that and other conferences, and elsewhere.[20]

THE years 1959 and 1960 were devoted to digesting and implementing the decisions made in 1957 and 1958. So far as planning is concerned, what happened in 1958–59 and especially in the first half of 1960 seems to

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[16] Academy of Sciences USSR, Institute of Economics, Moscow, 1959. Four papers were read and forty-six speakers participated in the discussion. *Zakon Stoimosti i evo Ispolzovanie v Narodnom Khoziaistve SSSR.*

[17] Academy of Sciences USSR, Institute of Economics, and the All-Union Council of Scientific-Technical Societies, *Ekonomicheskaya Effektivnost Kapitalnykh Vlozhenii i Novoi Tekhniki* (Moscow, 1959, p. 8).

[18] Moscow State University, *Zemelnaya Renta v Sotsialisticheskom Selskom Khoziaistve* (Moscow, 1959).

[19] For an apt analysis of these discussions see Alfred Zauberman, 'The Soviet Debate on the Law of Value and Price Formation', in *Value and Plan*, G. Grossman, ed., California University Press, pp. 17–35.

[20] See, for example, T. S. Khachaturov's paper at the Conference on Economic Effectiveness (op. cit., p. 18). This was the principal paper at the conference, and Khachaturov was also the chief editor of the report.

have been a reversion to the condemned past. An attempt was made to abolish the preparation of the annual plans each year 'as if new', and to replace them by annual segments of the perspective plan. There was some sense in the idea, but it was handled in a way that may lead to deterioration rather than improvement. Nor was the extension at the end of 1959 of the period for which the so-called general plan is to be prepared from 15 to 20 years, an act of wisdom; moreover, it hardly changes anything. The 20-year plan will have as little place in guiding the Soviet economy as would the 15-year plan, except at best for some special items such as electric power and some particularly important questions of regional development, as in central Siberia.

By a decision of April 1960, planning work was once more split between two organisations. Gosplan USSR retained only the work on current planning (one year and less). Medium- and long-range planning was passed to the Gosekonomsovet (in full, the State Scientific-Economic Council attached to the Council of Ministers of the USSR). For reasons not clear to this writer, this renewed splitting was introduced in a semi-secretive manner.

The close of the year 1960 brought a great surprise. After 40 years of rigid planning, especially harmful in the FYPs, it was realised that planning must be elastic. Plan or no plan, the economy was subject to constant change. By a decision of 26 December 1960, to become operative in 1962, the annual plan is to include targets for the major indicators five years ahead, that is, in the first instance, for 1966. The FYPs will thus be revised every year. Incidentally, it is interesting to discover that after 40 years of planning, the Soviets obtained the idea of a 'moving' FYP from the American corporations, a fact admitted in 1960 by a Gosplan USSR representative to a delegation of American scholars visiting the USSR.

The new measure seems to be closely connected with the decision of December 1956 to make the plans realistic; this affected five-year planning in the first place. The FYPs needed to be put on a healthy basis first, so that they should not adversely affect the less-infected annual plans to which they were connected.

The December 1960 project reverses completely the measure contemplated in 1958 and 1959, under which the annual segments of the SYP were to operate, albeit with revisions, as annual plans for their respective years. Had this been put into operation, rigidity might have turned into paralysis.

The surprise may have been premature, for it turns out that what is actually intended is apparently to combine the method of a moving FYP with the old form of a rigid FYP, with a year-by-year breakdown, in which the yearly targets will, with revisions, serve as the annual plan.[21] No thought seems to have been given to the likelihood that such a combination is bound to create confusion and to be in fact unworkable.

The separation of the organisation for long and medium plans from that for current planning remains in being, although it has become even more absurd. Two bodies will apparently work on the same plan, or on part of the same plan. Nor, apparently, is the principle of elasticity to be extended to the general (15–20 years) plan, although this needs its application even more than the medium-range plan.

As formulated in December 1960, the new step in planning looked good, indeed excellent, suggesting that the thaw was making significant progress. As interpreted by the authoritative Efimov, it can only lead to confusion. Even if the thaw on the planning front continues, it will do so in the peculiarly distorted Soviet fashion.

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[21] See A. Efimov, head of the Gosekonomsovet, in *Voprosy Ekonomiki*, 1961, 4, pp. 19–21.

People in Figures

SOVIET POPULATION TRENDS

Michael K. Roof *

SOME results of the latest census in the world's third most populous country have now been published. Though incomplete, their analysis is of great interest, and the implications often highly revealing.

The census of the USSR was taken on 15 January 1959, and the first results of the census were announced on 10 May 1959, reporting the total, urban, and rural population, by administrative subdivisions of the country, as well as the population of cities with 50,000 or more inhabitants and selected smaller urban places of administrative significance. The second results were released on 4 February 1960, cast in such a form as to publicise the educational attainment of the population, the distribution of population by ethnic-national groups, and the age-sex composition. A third summary of census results, released in December 1960, deals essentially, and not too intelligibly, with labour force and occupations.

Meanwhile, summaries of a few local census results—comparable more or less to the data reported for the country as a whole—have appeared in republican newspapers, and various kinds of fragmentary information have been announced in a multiplicity of Soviet sources. It is planned to publish the results of the 1959 census in some detail, but what exactly will be released, and when, is unknown.

The 1959 census was patterned on the (last) census of 1939. There were minor changes in the ordering and wording of the fifteen questions, but these need not concern us here.[1] Judging by the general criteria, it seems likely that the 1959 census may have been a more full and comprehensive accounting. For example, more time and care was devoted to its planning. The political environment was also different: in 1939 the population census followed political purges and the suppression —on questionable grounds—of the 1937 census; in 1959 internal affairs were much more settled.

The Soviet censuses of both 1939 and 1959 stand out in striking contrast to those of other countries in certain respects. For example, in the Soviet census of 1939 about one-third more time per capita was spent on field work than in the United States census of 1940[2]; this intensive emphasis on field work in Soviet censuses is undoubtedly due to the special procedures not normally found in censuses of other countries. For example, there is the three-visitation procedure: first, the enumerator assesses in a general way the district he is to cover, including a preliminary tabulation of the number of inhabitants and the scheduling of appointments with persons who may be hard to reach on the date of the actual census; second, the full-scale enumeration occurs; and, third, a kind of post-enumeration is carried out by a group of officials, including a prominent official of the local urban or rural authority. Theoretically, at least, the post-enumeration check is supposed to cover 100 per cent of the enumerated population; in fact it is highly

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[1] Fifteen questions were asked in the 1959 census: (1) relationship to the head of the family; (2) permanently resident; (3) temporarily resident; (4) sex; (5) age; (6) married at present or not; (7) nationality; (8) native tongue; (9) citizenship; (10) educational attainment; (11) name of educational institution, if currently enrolled; (13) place of work; (14) means of livelihood if without occupation; and (15) social group (workers; employee; collective farmer; handicraftsman, member of co-operative; individual farmer; handicraftsman, not member of co-operative; individuals in liberal professions; clergy).

[2] This is the finding of Morris Ullman of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, on the basis of a thorough investigation of the methodology of the 1939 Soviet population census.

unlikely to be so complete. However, if a spot-check of the enumerator's work reveals errors, the particular enumerator's work would be thoroughly reviewed, and any pattern of intentional mistakes would certainly be viewed as a serious offence.

Another interesting characteristic of recent Soviet censuses is the requirement that the information be obtained from the individual himself, rather than secondhand, and—other things being equal—this should make for a more accurate count. Exceptions to this rule are said to be limited to persons who are unavailable, clearly incompetent, or unable to respond to the census questions, such as absentees, small children, and sick persons.

MANY aspects of the first announcement of Soviet census results have been analysed in detail in various Western sources, and therefore only supplementary remarks seem in order here.[3] First, there is still some confusion concerning the pre-war size of the Soviet population. In the first post-war Soviet statistical handbook it was claimed that the prewar figure of 191,700,000 referred to 1940; the incorrectness of this attribution was discovered in the West, and in the latest census reports the earlier figure is correctly attributed to 1939. However, it has now been revised downward, to 190,700,000, without explanation, although the difference can probably be traced to revised estimates of the size of the population in territories annexed by the USSR.

Second, too little attention has been given to the fact, evident since 1957, that—while Western analysts in 1950 accepted the Soviet statement that the USSR's population was about 200,000,000—the Soviet authorities had direct data showing the poulation to be only about 180,000,000 in 1950.

Third, it is also significant that the official Soviet estimate for April 1956 of 200,200,000 inhabitants is quite compatible with the results of the January 1959 census. It is a credit to Soviet statisticians that, despite the chaos created by the second world war and its aftermath, they were able on the basis of current statistics to come up with such an accurate estimate of the total population in 1956, 17 years after their last census. In recent Soviet statistical handbooks all yearly figures showing the natural increase of population (i.e., excess of births over deaths) have been revised backward to 1950, presumably taking the 1959 census result as a starting point. These revisions imply an error in the 1956 official estimate of only 1,000,000, if allowance is made for emigration from the USSR in 1956–59.

The 1959 census revealed a population of 208,827,000, a figure far below earlier Western expectations and one which reflects very heavy war-produced population losses running to several tens of millions. The census also indicates that the USSR had in 1959 about 100,000,000 persons in places classified as urban or urban-type settlements. Comparisons of the 1959 census data with the 1956 data from Soviet current statistics has generated some scepticism concerning the accuracy of the estimated urban population in 1956 of 87,000,000; i.e., the 1956–59 rate of growth is thought to be too large. The data available at present—in particular, the statistics on non-agricultural employment which, in the Soviet Union, shows a high degree of correlation with urban population changes—would rather indicate that the estimate of urban population for 1956, like the estimate of the total population for the same year, was probably highly accurate.[4]

The period 1939 to 1959 witnessed a net growth of urban population of 39,400,000, while the rural population sustained a net loss of 21,000,000. In newly released estimates by

[3] An early analysis of Soviet census returns was prepared by Warren W. Eason ('The Soviet Population Today', *Foreign Affairs*, July 1959). An impressively well-rounded study has been made by John F. Kantner of the Population Council ('Recent Demographic Trends in the USSR', *Milbank Memorial Fund*, Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth Annual Conference, 4–5 November 1959). See also Michael Roof, 'The Russian Population Enigma Reconsidered', and Galina Selegen, 'The First Report of the Soviet Census of 1959', in *Population Studies*, July 1960.

[4] The accuracy of the 1956 urban population count has also been defended, indirectly, by Demitri Shimkin, 'Demographic Changes and Socio-Economic Forces within the Soviet Union, 1939–1959', *Milbank Memorial Fund*, 1960.

Soviet statisticians, 8,000,000 of the urban growth is attributed to natural increase of the urban population, 7,000,000 to the reclassification of former rural places,[5] and 24–25,000,000 to net rural-to-urban migration. The implied natural increase of the rural population is 10–11,000,000, but, of course, the loss of 31–32,000,000 to urban communities more than wiped out this natural increase (as was true, though, on a lesser scale, in the period 1926–39).

The redistribution of the Soviet population in the inter-censal period has been subjected to careful scrutiny in Western sources.[6] Gross population shifts during and since the war were massive and involved many millions of peoples; in this sense, the *net* redistribution among regions appears relatively small. However, when one considers the urban and rural populations of different regions separately, it becomes clear that substantial net redistribution has occurred—shifts away from the north, west, and southern regions and towards the Urals and the east. Most important, such comparisons make clear that differential rates of industrialisation and urbanisation have in the last two decades, as during the 1930s, been major determinants of the direction and intensity of population redistribution in the Soviet Union.

THE data on educational attainment are impressive in terms of what the regime has been able to achieve in the way of expanding educational training and facilities as compared with 1939. Other comparisons, however, reveal a quite different picture. For example, *per capita* levels of educational attainment in the Soviet Union do not approach 1959 rates in the United States, no matter at what level the comparison is made,[7] and—Soviet propaganda notwithstanding—this holds true still more for women than for men, with a single exception.

It is also revealing that in 1959 there were 3,778,000 persons with completed higher education, 1,933,000 men and 1,845,000 women—but for a different reason. When these data are compared with statistics in Soviet handbooks showing employment in the civilian economy, two significant implications emerge. First, the proportion of women with higher degrees who are not employed in civilian economy is quite low (reflecting the labour-force squeeze)—only about 12 per cent. as compared with about one-third before the war, in 1937. Second, on the assumption that the proportion of males not employed at all (i.e., retired, etc.) would hardly be less than an arbitrary one-half of the female rate (this assumption can be partly supported on the basis of other reasoning), it appears that approximately 350,000 male college graduates are not employed in the civilian economy.[8] This group consists almost entirely of specialists attached directly to, or associated with, Soviet military activities, ranging from high-powered research on rockets and missiles to teaching in military academies.

Another striking thing about the Soviet educational figures is the increased role of

[5] Lorimer (*The Population of the Soviet Union*, 1946, pp. 147 and 149) apparently interpreted this concept erroneously in analysing changes between 1926 and 1939. It can be demonstrated that in dividing up the components of urban and rural population change a residual method was used by Soviet statisticians which implies that the population of 'reclassified' places must refer to the date of their reclassification, i.e., their subsequent natural increase and migratory gain or loss is included under the independent categories of 'natural increase' and 'migration', and not as Lorimer assumed.

[6] M. K. Roof and F. A. Leedy, 'Population Redistribution in the Soviet Union, 1939–1956', *The Geographical Review*, No. 2, 1959. A. J. Newth, 'Two Notes on Population', *Soviet Studies*, July 1959. Demitri Shimkin, op. cit. M. K. Roof, 'Recent Trends in Soviet Internal Migration Policies', *REMP Bulletin* (Research Group for European Migration Problems), January-March 1960. Selegen, op. cit.

[7] This refers to the levels of educational attainment. However, both in terms of annual graduations and of the total stock of such persons, the USSR is well ahead of the United States with regard to engineers and doctors.

[8] Soviet sources report minor deficiencies in the annual registration of college graduates employed in the civilian economy which should not be exaggerated (few countries have such a fine record-keeping system on this segment of the labour force). The estimate of 350,000 male college graduates not employed in the civilian economy attempts to allow for 50,000 male college graduates incorrectly reported in the employment data as well as for transitional unemployment (a month's vacation is permitted between graduation and reporting for work), and for post-graduate study by a very small number of college graduates.

women in education since 1939. Below the level of completed higher education there is now a substantial predominance of females, and even at the level of completed higher education the ratio of men to women is roughly equal. But significant urban-rural and regional differences still prevail in educational opportunities as a result of the unequal geographical distribution of institutions and restrictive quotas on certain ethnic groups; in many areas, such as Central Asia, local customs which inhibit school attendance still operate to some extent.

IN the 1926 Soviet census ethnic group was defined as *narodnost*, or ethnic group in terms of origin; in 1939 a more subjective criterion was substituted, the concept of *natsionalnost*, and the individual was asked 'to what ethnic group do you consider yourself to belong?'. While the USSR's total population increased by only 16 per cent 1926–39, the Russian population grew by 27 per cent, and this disparity reflects in great part the shifting of ethnic identity in favour of the Russians. Many analysts expected a significant shift in the period 1939–59 as a result of assimilation of non-Russians into the Russian group, although on a lower scale than 1926–39, since it was known in advance of the 1959 census that the same concept would be employed as in 1939. The present author, for one, was surprised that the group who considered themselves Russians did not increase more than the census actually shows[9]; be that as it may, there is a relative comparability of concepts between the 1939 and 1959 censuses, whereas this was not true between (a) the 1897 and 1926 censuses, or (b) the 1926 and 1939 censuses.

In terms of intercensal changes in ethnic identification, it is difficult to make numerical comparisons between 1939 and 1959, despite the comparability of concepts. Ethnic information for the old territory was never fully reported, although the unreported groups were a relatively insignificant proportion of the total population of the old territory. Much more serious is the fact that—as acknowledged by Soviet officials—the data on ethnic composition in the territories annexed by the USSR in the period 1939–46 are in part unreliable. Among the groups for which it is difficult to get reliable prewar information are the Jews, Germans, and Poles in the annexed areas (not to mention the Germans and Poles from outside the annexed areas who were deported to the USSR and survived to 1959); and, as a reciprocal aspect of this problem, the number of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians in the annexed areas. From the point of view of the population in the annexed territories, these data deficiencies are serious; but from the point of view of the overall ethnic composition of the Soviet population they are not important, since the population of the annexed territories constitutes but a fraction of the total USSR population.

The overall ethnic structure of Soviet population has not changed appreciably in the last intercensal period. Russians still constitute somewhat more than half the total population of the country (increasing from 53 to 55 per cent), and, together with Ukrainians and Belorussians, the three leading Slavic groups form a preponderant proportion —76 per cent—of the total. Jews were unique in suffering losses approaching total extermination in the occupied regions of the USSR; but Estonians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians also experienced severe losses. On the other hand, one should notice the tremendous population explosion among the mid-Asian peoples, or the peoples inhabiting Kazakhstan, Central Asia (Uzbek, Turkmen, Kirgiz, Tajik, and Karakalpak), and the Transcaucasus (Azerbaijani, Armenians, and Georgians). These relative gains are due in part to the high postwar natural increase (excess of births over deaths), and in part, apparently, to less deep involvement in the war. The application of basic sanitary practices, and somewhat easier access to modern medicine and medical facilities, have brought the crude death rates in

[9] An event, perhaps unprecedented in the history of Russian demography, has just occurred. Revised census data indicate a *decrease* in the number of Russians counted in the 1959 census by 400,000, although the total population remains constant. The decrease in the Russians is made up by an exactly comparable increase of Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Kazakhs. Presumably, this is a reclassification of persons of mixed ethnic strains.

Soviet Central Asia down to an all-time low, while the birth rates remain extremely high. This is the 'population explosion' in its classic sense.

THE second and related way of viewing the ethnic data is to consider the ethnic composition of the population in different geographic regions of the Soviet Union. Here, in addition to the uncertainty which surrounds certain portions of the acquired territories, primarily in the west, we have to rely on scattered and inadequate statistics for the various territorial subdivisions within the pre-1939 boundaries of the USSR. But, again, the problem is not insoluble, for the data have been ingeniously pieced together (though not yet published) by Allen Hetmanek. On the other hand, for 1959 more information of this kind has already been published than was *ever* made available from the 1939 census.

In terms of the ethnic composition of different territorial subdivisions, there are a number of interesting trends. The basic trend is towards the dispersal of ethnic groups spatially and the breakdown of formerly compact ethnic settlement areas. For example, the proportion of Ukrainians in the USSR who live outside the territorial limits of the Ukrainian Republic is far greater today than in 1939; the same thing holds true for other leading groups, including, notably, the Russians (in Kazakhstan, Russians now outnumber the native Kazakhs by 1,300,000) and Belorussians. This trend tends to become more marked in combination with industrialisation, improved transportation facilities, etc. It is, however, often thwarted, or even reversed, where there are forcible displacements of peoples or interruptions of the normal processes of industrialisation.

Leading exceptions to the trend towards dispersal are the Latvians and Estonians, who have tended to become more concentrated in the Baltic area. This is largely the product of a return movement of Russianised Balts as an aspect of Soviet policy to maintain control of this strategic area; it may also in part reflect the continued desire of these peoples to emphasise the distinctness of their ethnic identity.

Ethnic data on the Armenians must be considered separately, for in the intercensal period there was an influx of some 100,000 Armenians into the USSR from France, England, the United States, and other countries. The position of the Armenians in the USSR is also unusual in that only about half of the Armenians in the country are located within the territorial limits of the Republic bearing their name; other major concentrations of Armenians are in the neighbouring Transcaucasian republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan.

The situation of the Jews is still more atypical. In the pre-revolutionary period the Jews were concentrated in the 'pale of settlement' in the westernmost regions of the former Russian Empire. The censuses of 1926 and 1939 revealed the breakdown of this settlement area and important migratory flows into central Russia. This movement became a torrent in the face of Hitler's armies, and today there are important colonies of Soviet Jews throughout Asia, despite the continued failure of the experiment to make Birobijan, in the Soviet Far East, a major settlement area for the Soviet Jews. Thus, unlike other leading ethnic groups in the USSR, Soviet Jews are widely dispersed among different geographical regions.

THE age-sex composition of the population at the time of the 1959 census is reported in the second census announcement. Neither in connection with the 1939 census reports, nor in the new census summaries, is there direct information on the cross-tabulation of population by age and by sex in 1939, although the new census releases contain an estimated distribution of the 1939 population by age and the estimated *total* number (i.e., not by specific age groups) of men and of women. Fortunately, by use of indirect means, Western students have pieced together an age-by-sex distribution of the 1939 population which is probably only slightly inferior to the information which the Soviet government possesses and, for reasons inexplicable, continues to suppress. This information is critical for studying many aspects of the intercensal trends in Soviet population.

Let us compare the 'expected' population in 1949 (derived by projecting the 1939 age-sex composition forward ten years) with the 'actual' population in 1949 (derived by projecting the 1959 age-sex composition backward ten years). In this way an idea can be formed of the scope and characteristics of excess population losses during and immediately following the second world war. The details of these computations will not be presented here, but the general conclusions are pertinent to the present discussion. The population alive before the war (i.e. in 1939) seems to have suffered excess population losses from all causes (emigration, direct military and civilian casualties, losses from hardships associated directly or only indirectly, if at all, with the war, as in the case of deaths in Soviet forced labour camps) of roughly 25,000,000, consisting of 20,000,000 men and 5,000,000 women. The population ages 0–9 (born after 1939), furthermore, was in 1949 some 13–15,000,000 lower than could be reasonably expected in the absence of the war and attended calamities. Thus, excess losses amount to the staggering total of (very) approximately 40,000,000.

These results differ from earlier, pre-censal expectations in three important respects: (1) The total of excess losses is roughly 50 per cent higher than generally anticipated. (2) The degree by which male losses ages 10 and above in 1949, considered as a whole, exceed the losses of females is far greater than anticipated (in fact, the discrepancy in male losses is nearly sufficient to account for the total discrepancy in losses). (3) The fact that male losses were spread fairly evenly over each five-year age group, ages 20–49, in 1945 is surprising; it had been assumed that male losses would be heavily concentrated on the centre of the 'prime' (ages 20–39) military ages in 1945.

If we were to draw a (hypothetical) population pyramid, as it is called, on graph paper, with millions plotted on the horizontal axis and with the ages of the population by five-year groups plotted on the vertical axis, an almost perfectly symmetrical triangle would be outlined. The number of males, shown on the left half of the diagram, would nearly equal the females, shown on the right; and the successive gradations of the population by age would form a straight line from the lowest to the highest ages. The Soviet population in 1939 merely approached the symmetry of this triangle, for it bore the visible imprint of birth deficits and/or excess mortality associated with the first world war, the Civil War, famine, and collectivisation. In 1959, however, the population pyramid is still more grossly distorted; there are not only serious irregularities from age to age, but the upper portion of the pyramid is markedly skewed to the right, reflecting a predominance of women over men of 20,000,000 in ages above 30.

Among the most marked irregularities in the gradation of Soviet population by age in 1959 is the deficit of boys and girls ages 10–14 and 15–19. These deficits, of course, are the product of the great decline in fertility and of excess infant and child mortality during and immediately following the war. In recent years, and in the immediate future, these irregularities have influenced and will continue to influence the annual number of entrants into the Soviet labour force, the prime military ages, the child-bearing ages, and the total size of the working-age population.

The legal age for entering the labour force in the USSR is sixteen (although certain exceptions are permissible, especially in rural areas). The new data indicate that the average annual number of youths reaching sixteen in the period 1951–55 was 4,100,000; these were born during the peak fertility years of 1934–38. In the period 1956–59 (survivors of 1939–42 births) the figure declined by 10 per cent; during the one year 1960, the 16-year-olds numbered only ca. 1,700,000, or less than the 1951–55 average by nearly 60 per cent. Additional single year-of-age information is not available, but, according to the census groupings, the average annual number reaching 16 in the period 1961–64 will be 3,100,000—considerably above the level of 1960, but still far below the 1951–55 level. Probably not until 1966 will the average annual number of entrants into the labour force exceed the average of 1951–55.

The economic significance of these irregularities in the population structure has already caused major modifications in Soviet manpower policies; in particular, efforts have been made to spread their effects as much as possible by manipulating educational policies in such a way as to minimise full-time educational opportunities and to maximise labour-force participation.

THESE comparisons were derived from an examination of the reported age composition of the 1959 population. Other comparisons can be drawn with little loss of accuracy by projecting the 1959 data on different segments of the population backward to 1950 (by adding mortality 1950–58), and forward to 1975 (by subtracting mortality 1958–75).

The male population aged 20–34 is often regarded as the backbone of a country's military manpower capability. Whether we consider the population ages 20–24, 20–29, or 20–34, the new data indicate that the USSR's peak of military capability in the postwar period, purely from the point of view of human effectives, was reached in 1960–61, when—significantly enough—major reductions of the armed forces were announced. In part these reductions were certainly due to the changed nature of modern warfare, large armies being more expensive and less necessary than they used to be; but the timing of these cuts was also part of the general effort to free manpower for the civilian economy.

In the future the male population aged 20–34 will decline continuously, reaching a level 11 per cent below the 1961 peak by approximately 1968. Thereafter a modest increase can be expected, but the 1961 peak will not be reached even by 1975.

The principal ages of parenthood, again, are 20 to 34. Since the number of men and women in these age groups is approximately equal, the trends indicated for prime military ages also apply to the main child-bearing ages. Other things being equal, the population structure will lead to declines in fertility. It is not generally recognised that the fertility of Soviet women—when measured as the ratio of women in the child-bearing ages to the reported number of births—is at present about one-third *lower* than the fertility of women in the United States; most people still retain the outmoded picture of the Russian peasant as having a large family. Even specialists who are aware of the fact that Soviet women's fertility is lower than in the United States, frequently attribute this to the imbalance of the sexes caused by the USSR's incomparably greater losses of males in the war (United States losses totalled 300,000 men; Soviet military losses probably numbered 7–10,000,000). However, the facts do not support this point of view. When measured as the ratio of *men* in the relevant ages to the reported number of births, the fertility of Soviet men is one-quarter lower than the fertility of US males.

Given the catastrophic decline in the average size of the contingent entering the working ages (in the USSR, working ages consist of males aged 16–59 and females aged 16–54) in the late fifties and early sixties, it was earlier expected by Western analysts that there would be a substantial decline in the working-age population in 1961–62. This is not so. In April this year additional (fragmentary) data became available which suggest that the post-war peak in the working-age population may have been reached around 1958, that there was only a modest decline (half a million or so) 1958–60, and that the trend was reversed by 1961.

The differences in the computed size of the working-age population during 1958–61 are too small to be regarded as having statistical validity. They are undoubtedly correct, however, with regard to the general trend: surprisingly enough, the decline in the working-age population seems to be a thing of the past rather than of the future. By chance, during the years when the entering contingents were at such a low ebb, the deficit of youths was compensated by relatively large increases in the adult population of working age.

While the decrease was not substantial, we observe a truly remarkable reduction in the rate of growth. In 1951–55 the working-age population increased by 10 per cent; in 1956–60, by only 1·5 per cent. This situation would have had still more ominous implications for the Soviet economy were it not for the sex composition of the observed (slight) increase of

1,800,000 in the working ages during 1956–60. While females of working ages declined by 700,000, of more direct consequence for the labour force was an increase of males by 2,500,000.

In the period of the current seven-year plan, that is 1959–65, the data from the census indicate a net increase in the working-age population of only 4,300,000, or only one-third of the increment of 13,400,000 in the preceding seven years. There is abundant evidence that the Soviet government is aware of the seriousness of this striking reduction in rate of growth, for in recent years drastic measures have been taken to enlarge the proportion of the working-age population who are actually employed, to drain off pockets of unemployment (especially in western cities), to draw on marginal groups (youths, old people and women), and to reallocate manpower from less to more essential segments of the economy.[10]

The number of youths permitted to study full time in higher educational institutions, for example, has been altered downward,[11] and meanwhile there is evidence of the inclusion in the worker-employee category of students who work a few days a week under the new school reform of 1958. Military forces were reported to have been reduced in 1960–61 by 1,200,000.

It is difficult to decide whether the recent modest increases in the proportion of women among virtually all branches of the national economy in the worker-employee category (industry, transportation, etc.) are due to any real change in the participation rates of women in the labour force. It does seem convincing, however, that Soviet officials can scarcely fear a labour shortage, given the efforts to reduce the number of working pensioners,[12] and the still more important conversion of millions of workers and employees to a shorter work-week. In connection with the latter, however, the critical observer might well keep in mind the British and American studies during the war which showed the inefficiencies of an excessively long work-week and the *increased* production which often occurred when working hours were reduced.

Many Western observers (including the present writer) have attempted to compare assumed changes in the working-age population with the planned goal of increasing workers and employees by 11,900,000 by 1965. Such comparisons, it now seems, are not too meaningful. First, we do not know the volume of unemployed and other labour reserves which were untapped during the seven years preceding the initiation of the current plan, although scattered evidence suggests that it was considerable. Second, the coverage of the worker and employee category has in recent years been expanded in at least two major ways, making comparisons with earlier data difficult: (a) of greatest importance is the, in a sense, artificial inflation of this category by the inclusion as a result of a state decree of several million persons as 'workers and employees' who a year or so earlier were considered 'collective farmers'; (b) also of significance is a similar inclusion in 'workers and employees' of some 1,400,000 persons formerly listed separately as 'members of productive co-operatives'.

No conclusive answer can yet be given concerning the probable success or failure of the Soviet government in coping with the manpower pinch during the seven-year plan period. The data seem to indicate that the lowest point was reached during 1958–60 when, interestingly enough, above-plan increments of workers and employees were achieved (apart from the artificial increases mentioned above). The labour supply situation, as indicated by the data on

[10] If we utilise, instead of the conventional Soviet working-age population groups (males 16–59, females 16–54), for example, the age groups 15–59 for both men and women, the labour supply situation is much more favourable. Using these age groups as an index, the net increase in the able-bodied population in the seven-year period 1952–58 was 11,600,000 and in the seven-year period 1959–65 8,500,000. This illustrates the possibilities open to the Soviet government for pulling marginal groups into the labour force when needed.

[11] In recent years the trend in full-time enrolment in higher educational institutions has been relatively stable. In 1960, however, if we exclude evening and correspondence students, the trend seems in the process of being reversed on a modest scale.

[12] In the late nineteen-fifties, a period of labour surplus, as indicated above, the USSR reduced greatly the proportion of pensioners who were both receiving pensions and working. Recently Khrushchev has come out very strongly for the re-employment of pensioners in productive work, without loss of pension.

working-age population, should become more favourable each year from now until the end of the seven-year plan period. Finally, one should never forget that labour-force shortages are, except in extreme situations, relative in nature, particularly in a country like the USSR, where the government has the possibility of tightly controlling the allocation and re-allocation of labour, and where decisions can be made to sacrifice one segment of the economy for the benefit of another.

Rather than a labour supply problem, the Soviet government seems to be facing the critical problem of achieving a massive geographical redistribution of the labour force away from the overpopulated western regions where large labour surpluses exist in many large cities as well as in the countryside, to the new centres of industrialisation in the east. This problem has recently been widely discussed in the Soviet press and journals, and radical changes may be expected in the near future in labour-force policies, particularly in regard to recruitment and to control over turnover among specialists and others.[13]

ALTHOUGH the information supplied by the Soviet authorities is still somewhat lacking in clarity and totally deficient in critical detail, some of the Soviet population trends are clearly visible, and the data provide important clues to future developments.

Recent rates of Soviet population growth are quite high, and *if* they remain constant in the future, the USSR's population will *double* in 35–40 years. It seems likely that even during the next decade the rate of industrialisation and urbanisation will slow down appreciably, although continued substantial shifts of population and labour force from rural-to-urban as well as from urban-to-urban areas may be expected. A leading feature of future population trends in the USSR is likely to be a still more extensive movement of peoples to Kazakhstan, Central Asia, Siberia, and the Far East.

The Soviet Union's population is characterised not only by a diversity of peoples; these peoples often have markedly different rates of natural increase (excess of births over deaths). As compared with average annual increases of 17–18 per 1,000 inhabitants for the USSR as a whole, for example, the natural increase of the Estonians is only about 5 per 1,000 inhabitants, while the rate is 33 per 1,000 for the Azerbaijani. If these disparities were to continue in the future, the Estonian population would require 80 years to double; the Azerbaijani would double in 25 years! Numerous other differences could be cited. However, it should be kept in mind that it is not these relatively small groups which will determine the future ethnic structure of the USSR, but the mortality and natality rates of the three predominant groups—the Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians.

The educational reform of 1958 will probably slow down—in the short run at least—the rate of growth of higher education graduates, and the quality of educational training will be markedly changed. In the long run, however, the Soviet government will undoubtedly again provide the basis for a rapid expansion of higher and secondary education, although it seems that some of the qualitative revisions associated with the reform (such as production training in the lower grades) may become more or less permanent aspects of Soviet education.

During the past decade the age-sex structure of the Soviet population has tended each year to become more 'normal' from the point of view of its age and sex composition. Nevertheless, a quarter of a century will be required before the excessive imbalance in the sex ratio of the population aged 32 and above can become 'normal' (modest excess of females). The severely depleted cohorts of 1941–48, on the other hand, have already entered the child-producing ages and their reduced numbers will continue to influence child-bearing in Russia until well beyond the third quarter of the century.

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[13] This problem has received widespread attention in the Soviet press during the last year, and fantastic estimates of the gross population shifts which seem imminent have come from no less than the eminent Soviet economist, Sonin.

Report from Moscow, I

COMPOSERS' DILEMMA

Gerd Ruge

IN a small side-street off Gorki Street, where the magnificent buildings have lost their plaster, there stands the house of the Soviet Composers' Union. In this large but poky and badly built building I met two men who for quite different reasons play a leading role in Soviet musical life : Dmitri Shostakovich, the greatest contemporary composer in Russia, and Tikhon Khrennikov, the First Secretary of the Composers' Union, the leading organiser and political figure in Soviet music. I had formed a wrong preconception of both of them. At least I would never have imagined that Shostakovich would be an extremely nervous, timid, and seemingly almost frightened person, in spite of all the honours he has received and all the criticism he has withstood, and also despite the fact that the Soviet government sends him as its representative to peace conferences and cultural events abroad.

Tikhon Khrennikov was also quite different from the man I had been led to expect. He had been described to me as one of the activists who started out in the Communist Youth League, an enthusiast revelling in slogans and proclamations. For most of those who know Tikhon Khrennikov from his public appearances and speeches, he is still the vigorous young activist with the fiery tongue.

The man at the desk of the First Secretary of the Composers' Union was not very tall, fair-haired, and pink-complexioned, with pale eyes and eyebrows. He gave the impression of being rather blasé. He looked like a shrewd manager, a good organiser who carries all the statistics of his union in his head. And it was about the organising that we spoke to begin with. I asked whether all Soviet composers belong to the Union. Khrennikov replied in one sentence : 'No, only those who are accepted'. I then asked, who was accepted. 'Only those who comply with the statutes. That is to say, only professional musicians whose work is of social importance, not the host of amateurs who compose a song or so from time to time. An enrolment committee consisting of experienced composers, examines all applications for admission after hearing the applicant's work. Incidentally, not all the Union members are composers ; some are professors at the conservatoires, writers on music, etc. About two-thirds of the members are composers, and about one third not. The Union has altogether 1,300 members. Composers of every kind are represented, many of them only write songs and light music. Others, such as Shostakovich, write everything, from operas and symphonies to jazz. We have members like Novikov, who wrote "The Hymn of the Democratic Youth of the World" and composes mainly songs. Others write chiefly film music'.

I put this question to Khrennikov : 'What does a Soviet composer actually do when he has written something?' Tikhon Khrennikov replied quite nonchalantly : 'There are many organisations which buy music from composers—the radio, television, the cinema. The Ministry of Culture also buys music and so do publishers and such groups as the Red Army choir. It is quite possible that the radio or an orchestra will buy a large work. We have a large number of buyers. What we need is more music. We of the Union are accused of not writing enough music to meet the demand'.

THE answer failed entirely to satisfy me. I wanted to know if a composer can apply directly to one of the organisations he had mentioned, in order to sell his music. 'It is a kind of tradition with us', he said, 'that all members of the Union show their work to their fellow-members. That doesn't mean that they cannot submit them to publishers as well.

In the Union, however, the composer receives good advice about the performance and content of his work. And the Composers' Commission of the Ministry of Culture will also help him to sell his work. If a work is good it will find a buyer and the composer will be paid. Many composers enjoy showing their work to their Union colleagues. Discussions take place and opinions are expressed. If, for example, a composer has written a string quartet, we, the Union, pay the musicians to play it to his fellow members. The Union pays, it costs the composer nothing—nor does he have to pay for copying and duplicating'.

I asked if this applied to every composer. 'There is a spirit of absolute equality in the Union. Everyone has equal rights, no matter whether he is a Shostakovich or a quite unknown young composer. After the work has been performed there is a discussion. There are also expert sub-committees for the various types of music. Naturally a composer will not submit a bad work in any case. But there are often differences of opinion, and borderline cases. We also frequently arrange "exhibition concerts" at which new works are performed. Or members of the Union and interested amateurs meet to listen to controversial works. Afterwards they express their views and very often the composer takes their suggestions into account. Such discussions are always beneficial to the composer and we try to create a friendly atmosphere of mutual helpfulness. All the questions raised by the work are discussed —technical problems, problems of intellectual content and the light it throws on the composer's talent and ability'.

EVERYTHING Khrennikov told me, with a friendly smile, sounded innocuous enough. According to him, composers enjoy submitting their works to a committee of experts, so that censorship becomes a sort of amicable conversation. No doubt, technical problems can indeed be discussed very profitably among colleagues. But when a committee of experts discusses the 'intellectual content' of a work, which is only a euphemism for the less artistic expression 'political content', the matter becomes more complicated. At any rate so it seemed to me. Tikhon Khrennikov did not agree. 'The question of "intellectual content" is an objective, not a subjective problem. The Union appeals to its members to write about the present, since the contemporary is the essence of the creative spirit. It is our task to help in the development of communism and to support the Communist Party in its endeavours. We believe that our main job as composers is to extol the ideals to which our people aspire. That does not mean that we dictate to our members what subjects they are to treat. Every composer is free to choose his own subjects. I, for example, am the First Secretary of the Union, and want to write a ballet which is not based on a present-day subject, the ballet of a serf who was a dancer and an actress. She was a serf belonging to Count Sheremetiev. Her fate was very tragic. I have been offered a most attractive libretto and I shall write the ballet. Though the present is our main subject, historical subjects are not barred'.

I then tried to discover if basic subjects are agreed on in the internal sessions of the Union, whether composers are directed to deal with a particular subject or produce a particular type of work. Khrennikov misunderstood me, however, or found it convenient to misunderstand me. 'When a composer has a good subject', he said, 'he usually keeps it to himself as far as possible. On the other hand, the social task which he has to fulfil naturally gives him a direction and a purpose. There are many lies about Soviet music current in the West. It appears to be imagined that Soviet composers only write what they are ordered to. That is absolutely wrong. Everyone writes just what he wants to. Let us take my own career as an example. In addition to the operas "In the Storm" and "The Mother" I have also written an opera called "Fros Kabeyev". I choose my own subjects. "In the Storm" takes place in the civil war. "The Mother" is based on a story by Gorki. And "Fros Kabeyev" takes its subject-matter from the distant past'.

Tikhon Khrennikov appears to take such a naïve view of the problem of the Soviet composer's creative freedom that he did not grasp what I was talking about. One is allowed to write a ballet about a serf and this proves that one is not obliged to limit oneself to

contemporary themes and problems. According to Khrennikov, this implies also that the Soviet composer is under no necessity to follow directions imposed from above. But no doubt Tikhon Khrennikov will write his opera so as to make a good piece of communist propaganda out of it. He has never composed in any other way. And he makes out that he cannot see how any other kind of freedom can be meant than the freedom to introduce, occasionally, historical figures rather than present-day partisans and pioneers. Perhaps he is not interested in the composer's freedom to choose the form his work shall take, perhaps he is indifferent to the free expression of unpolitical feelings and ideas. Yet he has had, as Secretary of the Union, to take part in many debates in which composers were accused of formalism, snobbery, untunefulness, and, perhaps, lack of political optimism. He does not mention that. He seems to take it entirely for granted that the Composers' Union, which has a monopoly in the Soviet Union, should oblige all creative musicians to regard their work as part of the party's propaganda work.

Khrennikov probably detected that I did not find his reply entirely convincing. He proceeded to describe the various amenities which the Union offers its members. 'For an opera a composer gets 100,000 rubles. A large sum is usually paid for any big work. The composer is also paid a royalty. In general, our composers are doing very well financially. They are able to devote one and a half to two years to a large work. There are "Houses for Creative Artists" near Moscow, near Ivanovo, Leningrad, Kiev, and in the Karelian Republic. These are small houses in the woods, well equipped and provided with musical instruments. When he rises in the morning, the composer can hear his neighbour improvising on his fiddle. He listens at the open window, the sound fills him with inspiration, he sits down at the piano and starts composing. Every member of the Union can live and work in one of these houses once a year for two months with full board—every house has a communal kitchen. We also provide free medical attention for our members, and special polyclinics for composers and musicologists. I could also mention other things. The Union runs the Music Fund of the USSR which enables composers to work without financial worries. The composer applies to the Music Fund when he goes to one of our country houses. If he has to have an opera score copied, the Music Fund pays the cost. Whenever the composer wants anything—the Music Fund is there to help him.'

I asked whether the composers of popular songs and marches do better than the composers who write for the concert hall. 'One can't actually say that the song writers are better off', Khrennikov replied. 'It is impossible to single out a particular group and say they are better off. For example, Khachaturian is better off than many song writers. In the end it all depends on whether a composer is lazy or works hard. If he works normally . . . well, it's very difficult to say, there are so many individual differences'.

THE Soviet Composers' Union has its own publishing house, which publishes mainly contemporary music, by Soviet composers and also, as Khrennikov emphasised, by foreigners. 'We publish the best works from the democratic countries, and also from the West'. I asked which Western composers they published? Khrennikov pondered for a moment, then he said: 'Well, our firm is still quite young, only a year old. Our plans are still under discussion. I have no records here at the moment. But we certainly intend to publish works by our foreign colleagues'.

I tried to press the question: 'Which foreign colleagues?' I asked. 'Well, we are very fond of Carl Orff: he is very popular. "Carmina burana" is being performed here at the moment. Just a second, I'll show you the invitation . . .' On the hand bill which Khrennikov handed to me, I read:

Central House of the Composers. Foreign Committee of the Composers' Union of the USSR.
Evening of Foreign Music.
Concert on Records.
The programme will include: Carl Orff (West Germany) 'Carmina burana' (Bavarian songs), 'Catulli carmina' (Songs of Catullus).
Introduction by Musicologist O. T. Leontiev,

'We often put on foreign music and make it known to our composers', Khrennikov explained. When I enquired which foreign composers were already known, apart from Orff, he replied rather hesitantly, 'Who else? Well my dear chap, there are so many . . . Benjamin Britten is very popular and very well known. Then there are the French . . . Oh, we know all the good music that is being written in the West. We esteem all good music very highly. There's no need for me to mention the works of our comrades in the democratic countries, which are naturally also very popular here'.

The man with the rosy and chubby face sitting behind the Union Secretary's desk seemed convinced that his organisation represents a real paradise of the arts. Probably he himself has no problems at all. Possibly he has no wish to compose any music other than that for which the party pays. He has a flat in Moscow and a country house near the city. He has to put in two hours work a day for the Union; naturally there is more to do when a plenary session is imminent, at which general principles are discussed, with the participation of the cultural functionaries of the party, and at which the composers give an account of their work, indulge in criticism and self-criticism, receive praise or rebukes. At these meetings Khrennikov is in his element. No one can bring greater self-assurance to the task of summoning his fellow composers to fresh advances on the musical front.

A WEEK later I was sitting in the same room opposite a man with none of the jovial assurance of the Union Secretary. Dmitri Shostakovich is a small, grey-haired man, with a narrow face and eyes that rove nervously around. While I was putting questions to him, he stared at me almost as though I had hypnotised him. While he was replying, he gazed around, passing hands that were trembling through his hair, tying up his shoelaces, cleaning his glasses. He talks quickly but also hesitantly—as if constantly on guard. I reminded him of an article which he wrote in 1956, the year of the thaw. He wrote that critics should not mistake the tragic for the pessimistic. And it was no criterion of the value of a work whether the audience could or could not whistle the tunes of a symphony as they left the concert hall.

This article by Shostakovich had been a bugle call for the younger enthusiasts for music which is not committed to the party line. The composers who had been taken to task so brutally under the cultural dictatorship of Zhdanov, were now beginning to defend themselves, it was whispered in Moscow. And later on composers were rehabilitated who, years ago, had been accused by the critics of serious transgressions against socialist realism and lack of political consciousness. But then nothing more had been heard of the matter and the works formerly rejected as 'formalistic' were not performed again. Only those composers had been rehabilitated whom it was no longer desired to see condemned as enemies of the state, and whose former lapses were forgiven. Meanwhile Shostakovich had written another article in which he had referred to the importance of folksong-like music and the use of popular songs. In this article at any rate he had accepted the formula which governs officially-approved Soviet music: 'universally singable, expressive and easily remembered melodies as the most important element in music, and the overriding importance also of a sound harmonic foundation'. I tried to arouse Shostakovich's interest in the ideas he expressed in his earlier article, in the hope of getting at any rate an indirect answer to the question as to how it is possible for a composer to write great and profound works of art without offending against the principles laid down by the Composers' Union. Shostakovich evaded the question. 'It is quite true', he said, 'sometimes one must hear a work several times in order to understand it. With an operetta it's different of course. An operetta is not an operetta unless it captivates the audience from the very outset'. Possibly his mind was still on the operetta which he had written some time ago. It takes place in a new housing area on the outskirts of Moscow and is based on popular songs of the capital. It was not a complete success and I asked the composer how the idea of writing an operetta had come to him in the first place. 'It is difficult to say why one writes anything . . . I am very

fond of operettas and was anxious to try my hand at one. Every composer should try to write as many different types of music as possible. Yes, of course I shall go on writing operettas. It is pleasant working with the Moscow operetta company but I don't think that in the future I shall be more concerned with operettas than with other works. At the moment I am working at a quartet'. He glanced at me intently after every sentence as if to test the effect of what he was saying, and then his eyes continued roving round the room again.

I ALSO asked Shostakovich, as I had asked Khrennikov, what he does with a new work, where he takes it? He replied: 'When the work is ready, I show it to my colleagues in the Union. And then I try to get it performed of course. I show it to the soloists I have in mind and to a publisher. First of all, however, I get in touch with my comrades in the Composers' Union. We have a room here where new works can be performed. The score itself is not sufficient, there are too many people who want to hear the new work. After the performance the piece is discussed. The people who come to these concerts are not a special committee. Naturally I also have friends whose opinions interest me very much'.

Shostakovich told me that he spends half the week in his town house and the other half usually in his country house. 'I do not normally work regular hours, but once I start on a new piece, I work very hard. I am sometimes asked if I work in the morning or evening—I work all day and best of all in my country house. I compose very easily but I deliberate for a very long time before I begin. I get the greatest pleasure towards the end of a work. When it is finished it ceases to give me any pleasure at all. It bores me'.

I asked him once again how he got the idea of writing an operetta. I knew that the Composers' Union and the cultural officers of the party had been calling zealously for a 'Soviet operetta' for a long time now, to supersede the frivolous Western productions à la Countess Maritza. But I had not imagined that Shostakovich would compose a 'Soviet operetta'.

'The operetta was commissioned by the Operetta Theatre', Shostakovich explained. 'But the philharmonic societies also give commissions, as do choirs, orchestras, and ensembles. They commission everything, but, most often, symphonies and chamber music. Operas, ballets and so on are commissioned according to current requirements and interests. I earn a great deal. The state buys my works and pays a lot for them. There are also fees for each performance, of which I get a fixed percentage. It is the same for all composers: six to eight per cent of the takings in the case of an opera, three per cent in that of a symphony. I earn about 10,000 to 15,000 rubles a month. Formerly I also earned money from teaching. I no longer teach at the conservatoires, however. It takes up too much time'.

SHOSTAKOVICH collects books, records, and music—especially old music. But, he says, these things are not expensive in Moscow. And in his very modest suit, he certainly does not look like a man who squanders money and lives in luxury. I wondered what he does with 15,000 rubles a month (about twenty times as much as an ordinary worker earns) in a city where there are no luxury articles to buy. I asked him, therefore, how he spends his money. 'You know', he replied, 'I am very good at spending money, but I am not good at keeping accounts. I have a large family and two cars. The money runs away and I have no bookkeeper'.

I tried again to find out something more about his work and about his relationship to his own works. I asked him if he was particularly fond of any one of his works or of those of any special period and I waited to see if he might refer to the early 'formalistic' period, or if he would mention some work written since the party tightened its control. He gave me no clear answer but said: 'I find that question difficult to answer. My last work is always my favourite work. As time passes one begins to scrutinise one's earlier works more critically. Probably that is what starts one writing new works. When Goethe was asked which of his works was the best, he

replied "I have not written it yet". In my opinion that was an excellent answer. When an artist says "This is my favourite work" his creative energy has become exhausted'.

I tried again, however, to get an answer, or an indication of an answer, to the question whether Shostakovich himself has changed as much as his work and whether he really believes that all his works are of equal value, the symphonies and the concertos, the popular songs, the film waltzes, the operatic hits. I asked him about the intellectual and technical principles to which he feels that he owes allegiance. And I got an answer which Tikhon Khrennikov might have phrased more elegantly but certainly not more in acordance with the party line: 'It is very difficult to talk about oneself. I should like my music always to give pleasure to those who listen to it. I want always to be in close touch with my people and to express progressive, humanistic ideas in every possible way. There is no such thing as technical principles, but merely a lot of notes. They are all available to me and I can use them all. I don't want to hem myself in with technical principles'. A little disappointed, I said that his profession of belief in music that is 'close to the people' possibly explained the difference which I detected between his earlier and later works. I was thinking, though I did not actually say so, of the perceptible loss of courage, freshness, originality and conviction in his serious works, quite apart from such pieces as the 'March of the Red Army' and the 'Song of the Young Pioneers'. Shostakovich denied, however, that there had been any change at all. He had always tried to compose 'close to the people' and with progressive ideas. He merely admitted that there had been a certain external change: 'Much time has passed since the thirties. Some artists develop and change. But I can see no stylistic alteration in my own work. I am not the same as I was thirty years ago but a man remains true to his own essence whether he lives thirty or a hundred years. He merely ages and acquires more experience'.

Someone was already knocking again at the door of the lofty and gloomy room. Petitioners were waiting outside: the widow of a musician who cannot manage on her pension, one or two younger people, and a peasant type of woman. They all wanted to speak to Shostakovich in his capacity as a director of the Composers' Union. He does his regular stint of committee work: 'Sometimes it takes more time, sometimes less', he says. He also travels about the world for the Soviet government, making speeches and adding a touch of glamour to the Soviet delegation at peace conferences. Finally, he is also a composer. Dmitri Shostakovich is a terribly pestered man and perhaps this explains his almost pathological nervousness, which suggests a background of mental insecurity and fear. Perhaps he really is quite content that the party retrieved him from the evils of formalism, as a stern master that is also able to reward and forgive. All the same, however honestly he now believes in the principles of the party—and there is no reason why he should lay bare his soul to a foreign journalist—there must have been years of fear, depression and dissimulation before he adapted himself to the party line. Perhaps there is some deeper reason, some particular event of which we know nothing. One thing appears to be quite certain: in the paradise that is administered by Tikhon Khrennikov, Shostakovich has gained no happiness that would have been denied him elsewhere. He enjoys no material advantages which would have been denied him in another society, but instead he has made changes in his life as an artist which have involved a renunciation of his artistic integrity and all of which must have left a scar. Khrennikov's paradise of the arts where the artist gets everything he needs, is in reality a paradise of mediocrity and of government by a clique. The minority of those with truly creative gifts is controlled by the majority of the mediocre.

I left Shostakovich feeling depressed and disconcerted and I left the big gloomy house of the men who administer the Soviet composers' golden cage. Every time the bars of the cage are loosened they lay on a thicker coat of gold to keep the precious songbirds in the cage. So long as it is they who decide whether a composer may publish his work and whether a symphony may be printed and performed, so long will they exert a power that is almost as

effective as, if less obnoxious than, the brutal criticism to which composers were subjected under the cultural dictatorship of Zhdanov.

A LITTLE light fell from the street into the room, making the white hair of the old lady sitting by the window shine like a veil of mist around the dark silhouette of her head. Once it had become used to the darkness the eye discerned the outlines of a large writing desk, a rocking-chair, a sofa and a grand piano. I sat down in one of those strong comfortable armchairs designed at the beginning of the century. From the windows of the tenement house opposite there shone the light of pink and green artificial silk lamps, adorned with frillings, old-fashioned and inartistic, in the contemporary Soviet style. Behind me in the dark room I could feel the presence of a silent audience. The stillness continued for a few moments, then there came scratchy and crackling noises from the adjoining room, the high folding door of which stood open. These were followed by the sound of the opening bars of Bach's Mass in B minor.

It was a kind of private concert, though the darkened room does not form part of a private house, nor has it done so for the past forty years. There is a plate affixed to the entrance of the small house in a narrow side street, which bears the words :

SKRYABIN MUSEUM

One climbs to the first floor up a narrow and steep stone staircase. Everything smells rather damp and musty but one is entering a house that has been deserted for over forty years. All the same, the furniture seems almost more modern than anything one might expect to find in a contemporary Soviet house. This was how the Moscow intelligentsia lived fifty years ago, not a whit behind their contemporaries in the West.

Fifty years after his death the composer and pianist Alexander Skryabin is now almost forgotten by music lovers in the West. In the Soviet Union he was for many years one of the composers whose works were not played. The label 'decadent' which was attached to his music was possibly not wholly unjustified. His music, brilliant and full of dark colours and an over-intense atmosphere, no longer gives rise, however, to the embittered debates of fifty years ago.

The Museum, which is in fact the house where he lived, almost as he left it, is still a kind of meeting-place for his avowed supporters who form a small and constantly dwindling company. The old lady who looks after the museum is quite certainly a member of this devoted group of admirers. As a young girl she probably heard the elegant and romantic master, with the pointed beard, in the concert hall. As she shows photographs of Skryabin there is a gentle and admiring smile on her face and with deep seriousness she explains an apparatus of coloured lamps which the Master used in order to get into the right mood for composing his tone poems.

THERE were many elderly people among the audience : women with clean-featured sensitive faces under white hair, dressed very simply, almost shabbily ; elderly men in threadbare blue suits. Finally there was quite a number of young people, fair-haired girls in dark, high-necked frocks, listening to the music with their eyes shut and their heads propped up; and young men with alert, intelligent faces. The museum is one of the places where music-lovers meet to listen to works which are rarely if ever performed in the concert hall. Sometimes the music of Skryabin is played by one of the great pianists of the older generation, but just as often there are record recitals of other composers' music. The Museum seems to be a meeting place for the young and the old. The middle-aged are conspicuous by their absence. Possibly they are not so curious as the younger generation. Certainly they are not lured by memories of the past, like the older members of this audience.

On this evening, when for the first time I sat in one of Skryabin's armchairs, we listened to Bach's Mass in B minor. A tape-recording was played in the adjoining room. Someone had acquired a German record, a rare and precious object, and it had been transferred to tape : Herbert von Karajan was now conducting in the old house of Skryabin. The

audience had come to hear a work which they have no other chance of hearing. There are no Soviet recordings of Bach's masses or oratorios. And they are hardly ever performed in Moscow concert halls. A few years ago the choir of St. Thomas', Leipzig, brought Bach to Moscow. But this was a unique event. Now, once again, a small group of people were listening to a German performance of the B minor Mass in a darkened room. The absorbed audience was not disturbed by the fact that the record was already slightly scratched before being transferred to tape.

A LITTLE earlier I had met a completely different sort of audience in the small hall of the Moscow Conservatoire : young people full of love for music and full of expert knowledge but at the same time entirely without a sense of worship or reverence. Students of the Conservatoire were listening to other music students who were hoping to qualify to take part in the International Tchaikovsky Competition for young pianists and violinists. The hall was filled with a pleasantly unemotional, workmanlike atmosphere. Whilst a young pianist from Leningrad or Erevan was playing on the platform, fresh listeners crowded through the door, others left quietly, to arrive at their next class on time. One could hear them discussing the performances as they went down the stairs. And the young folk who were sitting together in small groups in the hall, were whispering amongst themselves, making admiring or critical remarks, and clapping enthusiastically when one of the pianists especially pleased them. Most of them were dressed in ordinary, cheap suits, only very few wore a tie. A few were ' arty ' types in polo-neck sweaters. Most of the girls were wearing the rather coarse, masculine-cut tailored jackets obtainable in the Moscow department stores. A few of them were wearing brilliant, home-made pullovers, and some, in whom it was possible to discern the future music teachers, were wearing white, high-necked blouses. Hardly any of these students seemed to be remotely trying to play the bohemian. They all looked like eager-to-learn bourgeois youngsters.

They criticised sharply and knew exactly when one of the young pianists deserved applause. They have had adequate opportunity to train their critical judgment at excellent concerts. Moscow is rich in virtuoso soloists even though there is a lack of first-class orchestras in the Soviet capital. As well as famous Soviet artists, for whose concerts one has to queue for hours for a ticket, it has been possible for some years now to hear Western soloists and orchestras with increasing frequency. Isaak Stern, Leopold Stokowski and Leonard Bernstein have been received with an enthusiasm which is reminiscent more of the musical fanaticism of the old Russia than of applause as we know it in the West. The jubilation springs from a thirst for foreign music, from a curiosity that is still far from satisfied. In many cases the curiosity was concentrated on the contemporary works in the programmes of foreign orchestras. For most of the listeners, however, there were disappointments in store. Even moderately contemporary works, which have long since been accepted in Western concert halls, still shock the average concert-goer in Moscow, for the Moscow musical public does not listen at all with the critical and informed ears of the young music students. Concerts, like stage plays, are attended by many chance visitors who merely want to be able to say they have been, people from the provinces with tickets obtained for them by friends, men in the capital on official business with complimentary tickets from their ministry, employees from Moscow factories which have tickets allocated to them. They are all enthusiastic listeners and spectators, but not people with an ear for music that sounds different from that of the Nineteenth Century or that of the insipid followers of the Russian classics, who are now turning out politically unobjectionable music. Moscow has no regular concert-going public, and this fact is deplored as much by the musicians as the managers of the big theatres. Even within the limits of the permitted it is in these circumstances impossible to risk experiments.

Nevertheless it does happen that the name of Bartok or even Britten occasionally appears on concert programmes.

There is even a record with a short piece by Hindemith which can be bought in the shops. And occasionally there is a rumour that the Mariinsky Theatre in Leningrad is to risk putting on an early ballet by Stravinsky. But hitherto his works have been barred from the Soviet concert halls, like the early 'formalistic' compositions of Prokofiev and Shostakovich. Records of these prohibited works pass from hand to hand among the connoisseurs in Moscow. The Composers' Union sometimes presents the less extreme examples of Western music on records, to its members and their friends. The great soloists bring records back from their foreign tours and play them to their pupils and friends. There are young musicians who are familiar with such names as Messiaen or Webern. There are at least one or two young composers in Moscow who share the same principles of composition as their colleagues of the same age in the West. But these composers have little hope of hearing their works performed in public in the next few years. They cannot even offer them for discussion within the limited circle of their colleagues of the Composers' Union. They compose for the drawer or for a few friends. And to earn a living they write film music. They lead a double life and it is unlikely that they can keep it up for long. Like their contemporaries who paint modern abstract pictures, they lack all public discussion and the stimulus of honest criticism. If they did present their works to the public, they would only hear reproaches, since only the condemnatory, negative voices would be allowed to be heard. But only an outstanding genius can work in a hermetically sealed space without in the long run losing all standards of judgment.

IN Soviet criticism music is assessed according to the ideas which it expresses, or rather, according to whether it reflects the edifying and sublime feelings which the party has decreed must form the basic disposition of Soviet man. The listener in the concert hall, on the other hand, wants first to be touched and moved, but judges every performance according to the technical quality of the soloist. Perhaps it is the result of twenty years of artificial 'progressive' music from which all undertones of individual pain or joy are necessarily absent, that the concert halls of Moscow and Leningrad are at present nurseries of virtuosity. At any rate, the great Russian soloists at the turn of the century have found worthy descendants in the Soviet Union, and it is still the numerically small group of Jews from Odessa whose descendants dominate the concert platforms of the world, though no one can explain why the once lively and happy-go-lucky port on the Black Sea has produced such a profusion of talent. The young music students at the Conservatoires have the good fortune to study with the great masters of their instrument. But will they too accept the principles they are being taught in their composition classes, and the credo of the Soviet Composers' Union which requires popular and rousing tunes from its members? Will they toe the line although the most intelligent of them have been introduced by their friends and acquaintances to the music that is not performed in the Soviet Union?

The party is bound to continue the fight against 'formalism and cosmopolitanism' in music. There is among the composers something in the nature of a creative opposition which refuses to acquiesce in a situation in which the so-called 'song of the masses' is made the touchstone and cornerstone of music, and which believes that there are ideas and feelings which it is impossible to express in the style of a heroised Tchaikovsky concerto. But oddly enough, although they seem to be better off than their colleagues of the pen, whose works are so much more easily put to the test of political reliability, the composers appear to have allowed themselves to be controlled more easily than the writers. Perhaps the outward picture is deceptive, perhaps it is simply more difficult to introduce a highly original work into a concert programme than to smuggle stories or poems into literary anthologies which are only criticised

by the party after they have already found their readers. The thaw has not been so perceptible in the Soviet concert halls as in literature, it has not produced any works which imply a clean break with the directed music of the Zhdanov era. And the rumours from the provinces about an opera house in the Urals daring to produce a new work whose young composer thinks of himself as a pupil of Stravinsky, are impossible to check from Moscow.

HUNDREDS of Soviet composers make a good income from unoriginal, easily remembered settings of more or less political quatrains. They are the ones who get the praise and the honours and it is quite natural that most of the young unestablished talents should follow in their footsteps. It needs more than a strong character to renounce this kind of success, since only a few young musicians who might be courageous enough to do original work have the good fortune to meet with private recognition, for example, in the cultivated milieu of a small circle of friends in Moscow.

Without any contact with the schools of the West, but also without following the currently predominant trends of the latest music, these few can attempt to continue their work and develop their own ideas. Dmitri Shostakovich, Aram Khachaturian and Sergey Prokofiev are the most important influences on the serious composers of the younger generation. But the examples of the composers Shostakovich and Khachaturian illustrate the difficulties that surround creative work in the Soviet Union. In the last ten years both of them have composed an enormous quantity of officially required propaganda and light music of small value, though sometimes technically brilliant. Both of them have submitted to party control, and one senses in their new works a failure to explore the limits of experimentation tolerated by the party. It is hardly surprising if the younger generation of Soviet musicians prefers to turn to the fame-bringing perfection of musical technique of their grandfathers. Just as, in the West, mediocre talents join the most advanced modern schools camouflaged as 'avant-gardists', so their like-minded colleagues in the East end up in the political music club of the Composers' Union. The really original and highly gifted young composers are not only drowned by the flood of socialistic programme music, their works are not allowed to be heard beyond the tiny circle of their friends. But there is no need to fear, as there was only a few years ago. It is possible to listen to records of modern music in a small group or even to play it oneself to one's friends on the piano without imagining one is conspiring against the state.

It can even happen that a completely eccentric work may be submitted to a limited circle. So it happened in the Moscow Conservatoire with a piano sonata by Andrei Volkonski. The young composer who, incidentally, is able to live very well on his popular film music, was allowed to play to an audience of students one of his piano sonatas which are technically reminiscent of such avant-garde young West Europeans as Stockhausen or Boulez. It was not a success. Probably it was too big a jump for the audience. Most of them stamped or whistled to express their disapproval. As in Western Europe there is only a small group of music lovers in the Soviet Union who have any understanding of the latest developments in music. Such groups are also to be found in other cities besides Moscow. In Leningrad a son of A. Tolstoy plays a role similar to that of Andrei Volkonski in Moscow. It is impossible for a foreigner to judge how many young composers in the Soviet Union are seeking for new forms of expression. It is more difficult to discover anything about the new music than about new developments in literature and painting. It is no doubt true that similar developments are taking place among the musicians.

Report from Moscow, II

WRITERS AND THEIR PUBLIC

Richard Lindsay

I HEARD a writer describe an experience he had had when talking to a group of workers at a factory literary evening. His theme was 'The Writer and the War' and his treatment of it was shockingly unconventional from the official point of view. He described war as an unmitigated nightmare of suffering and death, and during the discussion that followed the trade union official who had introduced him and was sharing the platform with him attacked him for his negativism. It was the writer's job, he thundered, to portray the fight with the Nazis in a positive light, to show the heroism of Russian soldiers and the bright glory of their struggle against fascism; what the Russian people need, he went on, are books about war that will inspire them to defend their homeland, not books that will depress them. This reaction, the writer told me, was precisely the one he would have encountered if he had submitted to an average Soviet editor a manuscript giving a fair amount of emphasis to war's ugliness: 'What are you trying to propagandise? Who needs a story like this?'

In his talk to the workers the writer also touched upon the nature of artistic talent. He spoke of it as something mysterious, something no philosopher or psychologist, not even the great Pavlov, could define. He described it as a special sensitivity of the heart, or mind or eye, or ear, that, for lack of a better definition, we call *bozhii dar*, a gift from God. Again he was rebuked by the trade union official, this time for his politically backward reference to God (at which point the writer referred him to Khrushchev's speeches, where he could find such references in plenty), and also for his defence of the mysteriousness of talent and its necessity for a writer. All that a writer needed, the official contended, was to be stimulated by and faithful to correct political positions. If any of the workers present had been *au courant* with contemporary Soviet literary criticism, they would have known that the vulgarised interpretation of literary talent their simple-minded trade union representative was expounding had been abandoned long before. But that wasn't what bothered them. What bothered them was that his introduction of politics into a non-political discussion had the unpleasant taste of the daily diet of propaganda they got from their newspapers, radio, and factory agitators. They had come for a different kind of evening, and the official's remarks made them angry. They shouted him down with the words: 'Drop it, it's not interesting, we've heard all about that'.

The writer said it was a highly satisfactory moment for him when the audience silenced his opponent. He was impressed anew that night with the belief that there is nothing Russians hunger for more than 'true, sincere, living words'.

One of the reasons why foreign books enjoy a popularity in the Soviet Union that would make a profit-minded publisher's head swim is precisely this hunger for 'true, sincere, living words'. Last year it was Remarque's *The Return* and *Three Soldiers*—the two stories in one volume—that was all the rage. I saw long lines of people in front of bookstalls eagerly waiting their turn to buy it, and paying 25 rubles, a lot of money for a book in the Soviet Union and a lot of money for the average Russian. For about a week after it was released for sale Moscow was all abuzz about it, with people worrying whether they would manage to get their copy, or whether a friend from whom they could borrow it would get one. Russian readers are so bored by their own literature and so irritated by its falseness and tendentiousness that one gets the impression they would read nothing but Western fiction if it were more readily accessible to them. Actually, something

like this seems to be the case with Western films, which are fairly regularly shown in the major cities of the Soviet Union, and, if the people who tell you so are to be believed, have won a circle of movie-goers who have given up their own films.

This enthusiasm for foreign literature in translation makes translators an especially favoured breed in the Soviet Union. There is a good deal of individual enterprise. The pay for translating is very good indeed, and the successful sale of a translation, especially from contemporary Western literature, is assured beforehand. Translating is a kind of sweepstake and a lot of people nourish the dream of quick riches from it. People who happen to know English, as well as professional translators, are always shopping around for a contemporary title, and I was often asked to recommend something that might be 'acceptable' to Soviet editors. 'Acceptable' did not necessarily mean supporting the official view of the capitalist West—though that, of course, would make it almost a sure bet for publication—but one that would not be considered politically hostile. Judged by these criteria, a lot of Western literature could get published in the Soviet Union; and, though the selection process naturally favours books kindred in spirit to Soviet ideology, I had the impression that if Russian translators could get at Western literature more easily and knew it better, the sampling of available titles would be broader than it is.

TO say that Russians are passionate admirers of Western literature or Western films because they are bored and irritated with their own is to tell only half the story. Russians have been so thoroughly cut off from the rest of the world for so long, and are so anxious to know how other peoples live, that they are willing in a kind of paroxysm of curiosity to take what knowledge they can get any way they can get it. Last November an English Film Festival consisting of ten films was being given in a large theatre in Leningrad. The festival ran for ten days, one day for each film. In order to accommodate everyone who wanted to see them, the theatre ran round-the-clock sessions, and in November, in Leningrad, the northernmost metropolis of the world, people waited in long lines for tickets every hour of the day and night, or woke up all over the city during the small hours of the morning, in shifts, at two-hour intervals, to see *The Horse's Mouth* or *Wee Geordie.*

Another reason why Russians stampede movie houses showing Western films and buy up translations of Western novels in the blink of an eye is that they want to learn about the manners, the values, the dress of the people of that tantalising world from which they are isolated. Nothing is more impressive than this raging desire for knowledge about the West, and no traveller in the Soviet Union can resist its onslaught: the summer street scene of a solitary Western tourist surrounded by Russians eagerly listening to him answer questions about his life is as familiar a feature of the face of Soviet Russia as is the skyscraper of Moscow University.

I was besieged by a steady stream of requests from friends and acquaintances who knew English for books on contemporary American and English literature and history, for newspapers, magazines, and art reproductions. Such things are not easily come by, and friends who trust one another pass them on from hand to hand. But I encountered a striking instance of lack of generosity in a young woman who confessed to me that she and a friend owned a Skira edition of Matisse, a treasure which, she said, she and her friend sometimes got together to admire, but would share with no one. I had met enough young intellectuals to be astonished by the extent of their knowledge of modern Western art, and particularly by the intensity of their admiration for it, which contrasted so sharply with the matter-of-fact knowingness of comparable young people at home. This little incident with the miserly art lover served to crystallise an impression I had been gathering for many months: that there is a dynamic of deprivation at work among the intellectually advanced young people which generates an especially intense admiration for modern art and literature; and that if the restraints were removed there might be a cultural flowering that would amaze the world.

I KNEW that young writers, privately, 'for the desk drawer', as they say, experiment with modernist literary devices in their writings; I got my first taste of the kind of poetry young Russian writers produce at a literary evening a novelist friend, Sergei, took me to. The old-fashioned literary evening, which seems to have vanished from the American literary scene, has maintained a vigorous existence in the Soviet Union. But with a difference. It is not merely an occasion for writers to exchange ideas. It is one of the few avenues the non-conformists have to an audience. Apart from this, 'underground' manuscripts are circulated in typewritten copies, and judging by the size of the files many writers have of their colleagues' unpublishable works, there must be either a good number of self-sacrificing souls among them who are willing to reproduce their own copies and pass them on to friends, or a well-developed loan and reproduction system. The writer I went to see that evening had earned his reputation as one of the more talented young poets in Moscow on the strength of just such typewritten sheets of poems, and Sergei took me to see him as much from a desire to hear anything new he might have written as to introduce me.

Volodya was 23 or 24, small and delicately made, with black hair and dark eyes—the perfect poet. But this esthetic-looking young man earned his living as a hydraulic engineer, and if he continued to write the kind of poems he had been writing the chances were he would never see them in print or earn a ruble from them. The evening began with the standardised questions asked by Russians when they meet Americans. What did I do and how much did I earn, how many rooms did I have, did I own my own car? Volodya lived with his young wife in a single room, nicely furnished in a style called 'Riga-modern', after the city in which the light, clean-lined furniture is made, and reminiscent of the beginnings of Western modernism in furniture of some 30 years ago. After we had sat around and talked and had our tea, Sergei asked Volodya if he had any new poems to read. He needed a little coaxing, but finally got the poems out of his desk, took a position behind his chair, and began reading. He read for about half an hour, some dozen poems, and each was more difficult than the last. I remember that they were lyrics, mostly about love, with a strangely solemn and at the same time harsh incantational rhythm that was very impressive to listen to. But apart from understanding individual words and lines, it was impossible from hearing them to make any sense of these exceedingly symbolic, intellectually involuted poems; and I know it was not my Russian that was at fault because Sergei also sat there with an air of blank incomprehension, unmoved by the rhythm, and even showing signs of annoyance.

When the reading was over, Sergei, who, at 40, is of a different generation from Volodya—an especially significant fact in the Soviet Union—made clear the grounds for his annoyance. The poems, he said, might very well be valuable from some higher esthetic point of view, but they were of absolutely no interest to him. He couldn't understand how any writer living in the Soviet Union could turn his back on social and political reality and devote himself to the cultivation of a pure art. What Sergei wanted from Volodya was satire, poems of protest, in a word, social consciousness, the very social consciousness that is officially demanded in the Soviet Union, but taking its position on the other side of orthodoxy.

Volodya maintained no less forcefully that his only business was to write good poetry, that he knew as well as anybody what country he lived in, but that literature had been poisoned in the Soviet Union by tendentiousness, and it was the job of his generation to restore it to its real purpose. And its real purpose was the evolution of itself as pure form, and nothing else. To illustrate his point he traced the main line of Russian poetry through Pushkin, Annensky, and Mandelshtam, the only three men who wrote genuine poetry in Russian as far as he was concerned. Pushkin, an infallible master of poetic form, though more concerned with reality than himself; Annensky, a symbolist, whose poetry Mirsky describes as being 'constructed with disconcerting and baffling subtleness and precision'; and, Mandelshtam, one of the great Russian poets of the twentieth century, whose every literary resource was

directed at accentuating form. Then, in the manner of the artist drunk with his own genius, and perhaps also to irritate Sergei further, Volodya added a fourth name to the list: his own.

I was troubled that evening by a disturbing irony. I couldn't help sympathising with Sergei's views; another time and another place and Volodya's position would be unobjectionable; but he did, after all, live in the Soviet Union. Yet it was precisely views like Sergei's that had animated the nineteenth century Russian revolutionary intelligentsia, whose insistence on the social duties of the writer and intolerance of estheticism in no small measure paved the way for the unhappy predicament of Soviet writers today.

IT does seem to be true that a preoccupation with literary form and experiment is typical of young writers in the Soviet Union. Whatever else may dissatisfy them about the regime, their desire to keep abreast of modern Western culture is frequently an overriding concern; and, indeed, one of the major resentments of educated young Russians in general is their inability to be modern in their dress and style of life as well as in their art and literature. You would find it almost impossible to meet anybody in the Soviet Union who believed anything could be done to change the regime, but with the young this sense of frustration has either turned them away from political thought, or else it tempers their political thinking in a special way. Even the ' underground ' work I saw of those young writers who *are* politically minded tended to be cooled by a certain detachment, its disaffections contained by an irony that is mocking but never savage. In general, the older writers I knew did not seem to feel they could afford mockery; one could often detect a cry of pain or outrage in their talk about society; and, if they do any writing at all ' for the drawer ', it is likely to be charged by a sharp political animus. It is natural that the political discontent of writers old enough to have lived through the nightmare of the Stalin era and its exposure should be more intense than that of their younger colleagues. For young people the Soviet system may be unattractive, but it is at the same time something inherited, the given environment. They do not seethe with the sense of guilt, betrayal, and disillusion of those who were personally involved in shaping it, only to have it torn from their hands and wrenched into forms they had not intended for it. It is dangerous to make generalisations on the basis of limited personal experiences, but it seemed to me that what I was witnessing there, in Volodya's apartment, was a characteristic conflict between two generations of literary oppositionists.

VICTOR NEKRASOV is the most popular young Russian prose writer today and a lot is expected of him. He is one of the writers to whom Russians give the highest praise possible in the Soviet Union by saying that he is a *chestny pisatel*—an honest writer. Russians are convinced that there is a growing number of writers who are less interested in making careers for themselves, ingratiating themselves with the bosses, or making money, than in writing truthful books.

Nekrasov is not only honest; he also writes well and is courageous. Last year he had an article in *Literaturnaya gazeta* reporting on a trip he had made to Italy and describing the architecture of Rome, both ancient and modern. His was the opening statement in an extended discussion proposing future directions for Soviet architecture that appeared in the pages of *Literaturnaya gazeta* for several months. Nekrasov is a trained architect, and his views carried weight with his readers. He was full of praise for the modern achitecture he saw in Italy, and in comparing it to contemporary Soviet architecture he said some very harsh things about the latter. One remark, in particular, has stuck in my memory: he said that in the last 30 years Soviet architects had not produced a single building one could look at with pleasure. Architecture is the only one of the arts that has recently made a breakthrough to modernity in the Soviet Union, and this indicates that Nekrasov's opinion must be widely enough held to have had the power to effect change. But you are not likely to see the architecture of the West so unequivocally praised and Soviet architecture so roundly condemned in the Soviet press; and you can still read plenty of pious nonsense about the

Soviet Union's 'socialist' architectural heritage, so Nekrasov was no doubt treading on a lot of people's toes. It is always with a shock of sudden clarity, like recovering from a bad dream by dousing one's head with cold water, that one comes across such straightforward writing amidst all the patriotic bathos and ideological cant that confound the senses of Soviet newspaper readers. Almost everybody I knew was delighted with Nekrasov's article, and those who are inclined to be optimistic about the future pointed to it as a sign of better things to come.

In Moscow I read Nekrasov's short novel, *V rodnom gorode* (*In One's Native Town*). It is a decidedly light-weight book, somewhat thin in its characterisations and the fabric of its plot, but it is well written, with a hint of Hemingway in its muscular terseness, and the characters are real people, not conventional types. Perhaps the resolution of the conflict is too pat: the hero discovers he has fallen in love with another woman and leaves his wife; but she is not injured by this because she finds love in the hero's best friend, a crippled war veteran who had despaired of ever leading a normal family life. So everything ends well and everybody is happy.

Perhaps in the larger outlines of his story Nekrasov had an eye on what would be acceptable to editors in a land where optimism is an official literary dogma. But in all other respects *V rodnom gorode* is free of the slightest trace of subservience to any official dogma, literary or other—if anything, it stands out precisely because of this. In the average work of Soviet fiction, you know you will find some more or less outright reflection of official ideology, some problem posed in line with current social programmes, while in Nekrasov's book there is almost total silence about society in its larger aspects. *V rodnom gorode* is a simple domestic drama about the private preoccupations of ordinary Russians, authentic in its communication of the everyday tenor of Soviet life, and reminiscent in these respects of Vera Panova's charming story *Seryozha*, which was also published in 1955. When these two books appeared the literary tendency they heralded was as yet hardly marked. Since then it has taken definite shape and a small number of writers, including Kazakov, Nagibin, and Tendryakov, have produced novels and stories with a psychological or moral interest, centred on the material of individual lives, problems of character and situation without broad social implications. These writers are often abused by critics for ignoring society and lacking political consciousness, but they continue to be published. One of the seemingly permanent cultural gains of the Khrushchev era is that writers are now able to publish genuine works of literature, narrow in focus, it is true, but unspoiled by the sham civic-mindedness that debases the run of Soviet fiction.

I said there is 'almost' total silence about society in its larger aspects in *V rodnom gorode*, for there is one scene in which a public issue does manage to intrude upon the private lives of the novel's characters. It describes a conflict in the party bureau of the engineering institute where Nikolai, the main male protagonist of the novel, is studying. Nikolai is the student member of the bureau, and leads a minority against the larger faction run by the dean, who is trying unjustly to remove an old and respected teacher from his job. We see that the dean has managed to gather a majority around himself because most of the bureau members, though they do not agree with him, fear that it may damage their careers to oppose him. Nekrasov engages in some bitter reflections on the evils of cowardice in the face of obvious injustice, and through Nikolai presents the case for honest action even if it means standing alone and taking risks.

The theme of social cowardice was particularly prominent in the brief literary movement of social protest of 1956–57. Nekrasov's novel dates from the early years of the thaw and it partakes of the critical spirit of that time. In those days intellectuals were seeking to explain why Soviet society had tolerated the Stalin regime's crimes and the answer they came up with pictured a general social paralysis, compounded of fear, cowardice and conformity, which rendered resistance impossible. When Russians talk about the same problem today it is not with a view to explaining the past, but rather to account for the present failure of Soviet society to go further in cleansing itself

of some of the uglier remnants of Stalinism, especially in the arts. Many of them believe that one reason why the wider possibilities under Khrushchev have not been fully exploited is because too many people persist in habits of fear no longer relevant to present realities. They are confident that the days of exile or annihilation for unorthodoxy are gone, never to return: the heaviest penalty one may expect nowadays for books or plays or films that take an independent line is severe criticism. Yet, they complain, people in the arts continue to play it safe, producing works according to old formulas so as to be sure to offend no one. For the most part these are the more than middle-aged survivors of the purges, whose spirits had been broken.

The film *The Cranes are Flying* is a case in point. It is the cinematic parallel to books like Nekrasov's *V rodnom gorode*, for it also presents an inversion of the usual Soviet formula; the social element is all but effaced in it by the personal. Yet there is one typically false note. At the end of the film the heroine, who until then had been distraught with guilt and remorse because she had been unfaithful to her husband when he was at the front, where he died, is suddenly transformed into a purposeful human being after listening to a patriotic speech about the glorious Soviet postwar future. Why this intrusion of political propaganda and the wonder-working powers of patriotism into a film that is otherwise honest and credible? A knowledgeable friend explained it by the simple fact that the director was one of the 'scared ones', who tacked on the ending as insurance against criticism. And what angered his associates most was that there was no need to do so.

A PLAYWRIGHT told me that he was going to 'commit a sin'. He had decided to write a play about the 'struggle for peace' in America. The play would be grist for the Soviet propaganda mill, but he would do his best to minimise this element; the idea appealed to him as an opportunity to write a genuine play. Only by removing its action to some distant land, he felt, would it be possible for him to create believable dramatic characters. Another writer who was present that evening had written a novel about the war and given some pages to characterisations of Germans. He remarked ironically that it was his Germans who drank, fought among themselves, whored, looted, and were cruel—and consequently were alive as characters, while his Russians always behaved in an ideologically approved virtuous manner, and were made of wood. The playwright who was 'going abroad' advised the novelist to take the road of a common friend and write novels about the distant past; this was another form of travelling that offered an escape from the fictional formulas of socialist realism.

Of all the novels and stories that deal with contemporary Soviet life, they could think of only a handful that were successful as works of literature. (They named Nekrasov's *In One's Native Town* and Tendryakov's *Three, Seven, Ace* as the two most outstanding examples.) Their most talented writers, men with splendid artistic accomplishments behind them, deteriorated as their imagination moved towards the present day. Sholokhov gets to contemporary reality in the second part of *Virgin Soil Upturned*, and they considered it the weakest part of his book. Ehrenburg's *Thaw* was also an artistic failure in their opinion because it adhered to Soviet literary conventions despite its unorthodox materials. They found the parts in Leonov's *Russian Forest* dealing with events before the revolution good and interesting, while those about post-revolutionary life struck them as dull and unreadable.

We talked about the way books get published in the Soviet Union. It was curious to hear the playwright speak of the crippling effect on Soviet literature of a 'lack of well-educated cadres' on the editorial boards of magazines and publishing houses; many fine manuscripts, inoffensive enough from an ideological point of view, but novel in their manner or content, never get past the typical Soviet editor because conventional trash is actually more congenial to his primitive taste and intelligence. Was it really possible for such intellectual cretins to hold responsible editorial positions, I asked. 'Stalin men, you know', he said.

The odious, disgraced 'Stalin men': the careerists, sycophants, informers, the scum that rose to the top when the intelligent and gifted were swept away—how Russians rail against them! They are blamed for blocking progress in every walk of life. I heard scholars excoriate the mindless, bureacratic 'chiefs' of Soviet learned institutions whose only claim to running them was and is their political reliability. Many of the editors the playwright had in mind may be poorly educated, but even the others are characteristically tainted by the mediocrity common to the Stalin generation of the Soviet elite. They are committed to the old literary orthodoxies because all their past activities, their prestige and, above all, their present positions are based on them. Literature must be understandable to the masses, for it is their teacher; literature must be inspired by social ideas; literature must reflect the wisdom of the party—of what use would they be if it were admitted that Soviet writers could write better books, and still be loyal, without slavish adherence to these doctrines?

Today these men form the main bastion of illiberalism and obscurantism in the Soviet literary world; original works have little chance with them. The composition of the editorial boards, according to the playwright, is particularly important now that the Central Committee's decrees on literature have lost the character of specific directives. He believed that the cultural bureaucrats in the Central Committee have only the most general ideas of what they want from literature and consequently are content to utter exhortations to writers which are open to a variety of interpretations. As for Khrushchev himself, his promise to let writers keep their own house in order is believed to have been made in earnest. Although he condemned the literature of social protest of 1956–57, he is thought to be genuinely reluctant to express preferences or dislikes for particular writers or literary tendencies. Editorial boards thus have a good deal of autonomy; as long as they are governed by men who are dogmatic, or lacking in intelligence and taste, Soviet literature will have a difficult time moving beyond its old frontiers, even within the wider limits now possible.

I asked him if Sofronov, Gribachev, and Kochetov, the leading figures of the anti-liberal faction in the Writers Union, did not represent the literary equivalents of the old-guard Stalinists; he was amused that these men could be thought of as acting on principle. In his opinion the only consideration that animates them is their desire for high office and the money, prestige, and trips abroad it brings. They hoped to be rewarded by the party for their zeal and designated as guardians of its interests in literature.

But the Kochetovs, Sofronovs, and Gribachevs are losing ground in Soviet literary politics; it is a sign of the gradual liberalisation that is taking place.* One of the small consolations, I learned, of the present relaxation is that writers may now without fear submit manuscripts to editors which formerly would have led to denunciations and physical repression. Today the manuscript is just rejected, probably with some strongly worded advice to explore more acceptable literary paths. There were some positive achievements last year. The publication of a small volume of verse by the futurist, Velemir Khlebnikov, whose *outré* poetic experimentation had long been anathema to Soviet editors, was an encouraging advance, and was greeted with great delight, especially by young writers. There was also Tendryakov's story in *Novy Mir*. And Anna Akhmatova has been commissioned to put together a complete edition of her poems.

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* *Postscript*: After completing these notes I received the February issue of the literary journal, *Oktyabr*, carrying on its masthead the name of a new chief editor—V. Kochetov. Apparently, what was a fact last year is no longer a fact. The conversation I describe with the playwright took place shortly after the U-2 incident, when a mood of guarded optimism with respect to cultural liberalisation was still possible. In the weeks immediately preceding the Powers trial in August 1960, and in the months after it, a renewed anti-liberal campaign was launched on all fronts. In literature, one of its first victories was the removal of S. Smirnov, the chief editor of *Literaturnaya gazeta*. And now, alas, there is Kochetov at the head of *Oktyabr*.

THE ORIGINS OF LITERARY CONTROL. II

Ernest J. Simmons

IN the preceding part of this essay* emphasis was placed on the development of the party's attitude towards the periodical press, for it ultimately defined also the party's attitude towards creative literature. At first, to be sure, the interests of the Bolshevik leaders were remote from belles-lettres. Novels, plays, and poetry were not accessible to the illiterate masses, whereas the pithy political message of the daily press could be read to workers and peasants by trained propagandists. The vast political and propaganda possibilities of creative literature were not fully grasped in these first years of revolutionary turmoil. The claim to freedom of expression for literary artists, which nineteenth-century Russian Marxists had firmly made, hardly troubled the conscience of party chieftains intent on manipulating a periodical press. In the first five years of the new regime, the only governmental decrees bearing directly on belles-lettres concerned the nationalisation of the works of many of the great Russian classics of the past, and a directive to the Commissariat of Education (Narkompros) to publish these in quantity in cheap editions.[1]

The Bolshevik leaders, however, were fully aware of the potential ideological danger to their regime of uncontrolled book publication. In the first instance, of course, they were not thinking so much of belles-lettres as of books in the fields of political and social sciences and of the new textbooks that would be required. Though nationalisation of the means of production of books could be undertaken, the government realised that it could not hope to monopolise the whole industry at this stage without seriously endangering the very existence of book publication. It is indicative of the unenlightened attitude of the leaders to creative literature that in the solution sought no apparent distinction was made between the publishing of belles-lettres and books on political, social, and economic subjects.

The solution was a particularly bold one at a time when the whole country was plunged in civil and interventionist wars and when its economic resources were at an extremely low ebb. For by a decree of 21 May 1919, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee established the Government Publishing House (*Gosizdat*). It directed that all government and party organisations throughout the country should thereafter publish through the medium of *Gosizdat*. In addition, the decree stated that 'The publishing activities of all learned and literary societies, and likewise of all other publishing firms [i.e., private firms] are subject to the regulations and control of the Government Publishing House'. At the head of *Gosizdat*, the decree declared, would be an editorial board, whose chairman and members would be appointed by the Council of People's Commissars, upon the recommendation of the Commissariat of Education and with the confirmation of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. Nominally *Gosizdat* would be a department of the Commissariat of Education.

One of the manifest intentions of *Gosizdat* was to drive out of existence competing private publishing firms, some of which had survived from the old regime, while a number of new ones, particularly devoted to belles-lettres, had sprung up since the Revolution. In this struggle the trump cards were all in the hands of *Gosizdat*, for in a very short time it had under its control all the means of producing printed material, the publishing and distribution of vast quantities of books and magazines, and in addition the planning and sanctioning of the total output of private firms.

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* The first part of Professor Simmons' essay appeared in the April–June 1961 issue of *Survey*.

[1] See decrees of 29 December 1917 and 14 February 1918 in N. M. Nikolaev, *Zakony o pechati* (Moscow, 1924).

The first three years (1919–21) of *Gosizdat* were extremely difficult. The ravaged country lacked nearly everything essential for book publication. Experts in the profession among non-communists were not desired and it was unlikely that they would have participated in the enterprise anyway. On the other hand, most of the skilled communists in publishing were involved in the more pressing tasks of the government and in fighting the civil war. The editorial board pleaded with the party to detail to *Gosizdat* expert workers busy with other affairs. Despite these unpromising conditions a surprising number of books were published, usually in very small editions because of the shortage of paper. The concentration over these first years was naturally on party material, writings of Lenin, Marx, and Engels, and propaganda tracts. However, cheap editions of Russian and some foreign classics were published, as well as a few works of Soviet writers of belles-lettres, such as Bedny, Mayakovsky, Serafimovich, Vs. Ivanov, Kazin, and Esenin. Older writers unsympathetic to the new regime scorned *Gosizdat*; they either remained silent or tried to publish in private firms.

FROM the very beginning party officials kept close watch on *Gosizdat* in an effort to prevent the appearance of any works that were not ideologically pure, a rather frequent occurrence among the private publishers who at this time, because of the mildness of government controls, were able to print books critical of the regime. Yet items would occasionally slip through the editorial board of *Gosizdat* itself which provoked stern reproof from vigilant party leaders. 'Only a fool or a malicious saboteur would pass this book',[2] Lenin wrote *Gosizdat* apropos of a work on peasant economy.

Another letter of Lenin to the first chairman of the editorial board of *Gosizdat*, V. V. Vorovsky, is worth quoting in full. Though this is not on a matter of ideological deviation, it does reveal in a striking manner the extent to which *Gosizdat* was a creature of the party, as well as the party's concern over standards in publication from the very outset of the firm's existence:

> Having looked through the brochure 'III International', 6–7 March 1919, published by the Government Publishing House, Moscow, 1919 (price 8 rubles), 99 pages, I sternly oppose such an edition and demand that all members of the editorial board of the Government Publishing House read this letter and take serious measures to guarantee that such a shameful thing will not be repeated.
>
> The brochure is shocking. What scribbling this is. There is no table of contents. What idiot or sloven, obviously illiterate, and in a drunken condition, collected all this 'material', statistics, speeches, and printed them in confusion.
>
> No foreword, no protocols, no precise text of decisions, no condensation of speeches, articles, notes—positively nothing! It is an unheard of scandal!
>
> A great historical event is disgraced by such a brochure.
>
> I demand: (1) Corrections of the running insets (put the culprits in prison and order the corrections to be pasted into all the copies).
>
> Report to me:
>
> (2a) How many copies were printed?
>
> (2b) How many were distributed?
>
> (3) Republication in a correct form. Show me the proofs.
>
> (4) Establish a rule that a definite person be responsible for every published item (require a book to be inscribed by the person responsible for it).
>
> (5) Other regulations; work them out and send them to me.[3]

Whatever the failings of *Gosizdat* during this period of War Communism, a start had been made by the party to develop an instrument for the control of all book publication almost as effective as that already functioning in the periodical press. Freedom of the press, however, had not been entirely eliminated. Even if the party had been able to do so, it was unwilling at this time to deprive the people entirely of a right which it had always championed. The party justified the extent of the deprivation by reference to the critical situation

[2] V. I. Lenin, *Sochineniya*, XXXV, 444.

[3] *Ibid.*, XXXV, 363–64.

that threatened the very existence of its rule, and it took care to create the impression that such restrictions would cease when the crisis had been surmounted. Yet a course of action had been started which in a regime on the way to becoming totalitarian could have only one outcome.

IN fact, the early party leaders had no clear notion of the function of writers under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marxism had provided no cogent blueprint for this stage. Whatever their future influence on creative literature, the initial actions on the press and publishing in general had been decreed largely out of concern for the manipulation of the daily press in the interests of the party. As we have seen, Lenin, in his 1905 article, was disposed to defend the right of the literary artist to express himself as he wished. Anatoli Lunacharsky, first Commissar of Education and a power in literary matters at this time, speculated as late as 1921, in an article significantly entitled 'Freedom of Books and the Revolution': 'Should a revolutionary government in principle preserve the right of individual creation? On this question I say, without equivocation, yes, it should'.[4] He quickly hedges, however, by remarking that the word is a weapon and hence a revolutionary government cannot permit it to be used against itself any more than it could permit a revolver or a machine gun. Similar views were held at this time by such party leaders as Bukharin and Trotsky.

Some measure of the freedom of discussion that prevailed on literary and artistic matters may be grasped from the meetings that regularly took place at Press House in Moscow during the early years of the Revolution. They were attended not only by outstanding figures in literature and the arts, such as Bryusov, Blok, Pasternak, Mayakovsky, Meierhold, Tairov, and Nemirovich-Danchenko, but also by important government officials who were interested in the 'new culture', such as Lunacharsky, Bukharin, and Kamenev. Before large audiences of intellectuals, writers read their works and critics propounded their aesthetic theories, and the listeners joined in the vigorous give and take of discussion. Here in these Press House meetings the original spirit of revolutionary freedom prevailed, uninhibited by any government or party controls, a sincere searching for a new word in art that would dignify the terrible sacrifices that men had made and were making in the name of a nobler future. The brilliant critic Vyacheslav Polonsky, who often attended these gatherings, writes of them: 'In these years, the years of the "pre-history" of Soviet literature, all the most important problems of future literary development were posed and discussed at Press House. The old and new literature, proletarian or bourgeois, the central questions of Marxist literary study, literature and psychoanalysis, the new theatre and new music, the intelligentsia and communism, the style of revolutionary and of bourgeois art . . . all was judged within the walls of Press House'.[5]

Out of this literary ferment, however, emerged two movements, the Futurists and the Proletcult, which tended to dominate the development of literature during the first four or five years of the Revolution. The history of both these movements has been frequently written and needs no retelling here. But their conflict with the party and Lenin in the matter of freedom of the press and literary controls must be underlined in the context of this article.

Futurism had represented a revolt against the form and content of bourgeois literature, especially the Symbolist movement, as early as 1912. It was rowdy and bohemian and stood for the destruction of the past in the name of the future. As a movement born in revolt it readily adopted the Revolution in 1917, and there were a few leading communists, especially Lunacharsky, who at first were happy to accept the Futurists as an organised group of writers eager to espouse the cause of the Revolution.

[4] A. Lunacharsky, 'Svoboda knigi i revolyutsiya', *Pechat i revolyutsiya*, 1921, No. 1, p. 5.

[5] V. Polonsky, *Ocherki literaturnovo dvizheniya revolyutsionnoi epokhi*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1929), p. 36.

Though some of the Futurists were appointed to posts in the Commissariat of Education, Lunacharsky quickly grew embarrassed over their antics and extravagant claims, as indeed did other government and party leaders who were unwilling to allow any group to speak in the name of the party on cultural matters. In particular, their destructive attitude towards the culture of the past displeased some of the principal party revolutionists who were strangely conservative about their cultural heritage. The party detailed Lunacharsky to administer an official rebuke which proved to be fatal to the movement. Though he wrote on behalf of the government, his statement gives the earliest expression of the party's position on two important points with reference to writers and literature: 'Two features of the young face of your paper, in whose pages my letter is printed, frighten me: its destructive tendencies in relation to the past, and its attempt, in speaking in the name of a definite school, to speak at the same time in the name of the government. . . . It would be wrong if the artist-innovators presumed to regard themselves as a *government* artistic school working for an official, even though revolutionary, art dictated from above'.[6]

THE main competition encountered by the Futurists in their desire to capture literary leadership in the new state was provided by the Proletcult (an abbreviation for Proletarian Culture). At first, backed by government support, the Proletcult achieved an unusual success in a relatively short time. From the point of view of the party and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the movement answered a primary political need of the moment, for the main plank in its platform was that the proletariat as the dominant class in a state on the road to socialism must develop a culture of its own to take the place of the culture hitherto prevailing of the bourgeois class. That literature and art were a reflection of class consciousness was accepted by the Proletcult, but apparently this dictum was not as rigidly understood as it was by Plekhanov. Proletarians would provide the bulk of the creative artists, but contributions of 'proletarians by orientation' were not excluded. Nor was the great heritage of bourgeois culture dismissed with contempt; proletarian artists would learn from the best of it and critically assimilate it.

An All-Russian Conference of the Proletcult in Moscow in the middle of September 1918 received the party's official stamp of approval in the form of a letter from Lenin addressed to the presidium of the conference, in which he solicited the aid of the Proletcult not so much in cultural matters as in rallying the workers behind the efforts of the government. And in November of that year Lenin actually appeared at a Moscow meeting of the Proletcult and gave a short talk about the problems of building a new culture.[7]

On the surface it seemed that the party had found in the Proletcult a highly effective instrument for the building of a culture that would be consistent with the political and social ideology of the new regime. At the height of its efforts in 1920 a multitude of workers were involved in a vast national network of activities on behalf of the organisation and an enthusiastic revolutionary spirit inspired the whole movement.

Despite its initial support, however, the party soon grew unhappy over the activities of the Proletcult. Unlike Futurism, which had been rebuffed for attempting to act in the name of the government, the Proletcult's theory of a collectivist proletarian culture required complete independence of both the party and the government. The movement demanded autonomy for its various organisations not only because it feared controls, but also because it maintained that a pure proletarian culture would suffer if it were subjected to the direction of the mixed intellectual and peasant elements in party and state. Further, in its rapid growth the movement tended to assume a form of administrative jurisdiction over the education of the workers. The Petrograd Proletcult was quite capable of demanding

[6] *Iskusstvo kommuny*, No. 4, 29 December 1918 (quoted in 'Khronika sovetskoi literatury za 20 let', *Literaturny kritik*, No. 7, 1937, pp. 139–40).

[7] Cf. 'Khronika sovetskoi literatury za 20 let', *Literaturny kritik*, No. 7, 1937, p. 135.

that factories should permit workers free time to attend its instruction classes.

Futurism had offered no challenge to the authority of the party; the Proletcult not only challenged but appeared to be endeavouring to substitute itself administratively for the party-controlled Commissariat of Education in directing the country's culture. The party, however, was in no position at this time to apply to a national organisation bent on developing proletarian art and culture the rigid sanctions it had already applied to the daily press. Many communists were involved in the Proletcult and the revolutionary tradition of freedom still surrounded writers and artists. Yet the Proletcult's insistence upon its autonomy in directing the cultural life of the proletariat was not long tolerated by the party and Lenin was the prime mover in deflating the organisation.

A FIRST glancing blow was struck by Lenin in the course of his speech at the Third All-Russian Congress of the Young Communist League (2 October 1920). He was, he said, convinced that it was impossible to build a proletarian culture out of whole cloth, so to speak, without an exact knowledge of the culture created in the course of the total development of mankind.

A few days later, however, Lunacharsky, contrary to instructions from Lenin, supported full autonomy for the Proletcult in a speech delivered at its First All-Russian Congress at Moscow. This situation reflects the differences of opinion that existed then among party leaders on the vital matter of the control of artistic expression. But what followed reveals equally well, and even this early in the history of the Soviet regime, the determination of at least the head of the party that no organised effort would be permitted to usurp in the slightest degree the power of the party to influence the minds of the people through the medium of the arts or any other medium. Learning of Lunacharsky's speech, Lenin at once drafted a resolution and had it pushed through the Central Committee of the party without delay; it was presented at the Congress of the Proletcult before its adjournment.[8]

The draft resolution begins by pointing out the responsibility of the proletariat and especially of its advance guard, the Communist Party, for taking 'the most active and the chief part in the whole business of the people's education'. Then, noting that the development of a real proletarian culture must be guided by Marxism, the resolution concludes: 'Standing steadfast on this position, the All-Russian Congress of the Proletcult in the most resolute terms rejects as theoretically false and practically harmful every attempt to devise its own special culture, to form special organisations of its own, to restrict the endeavours of the Commissariat of Education and the Proletcult, etc., or to establish the "autonomy" of the Proletcult within the institution of the Commissariat of Education, etc. On the contrary, the Congress regards it as the duty of all organisations of the Proletcult to consider themselves as aids to the appropriate organs of the Commissariat of Education, and to overcome its problems as part of the problems of the proletarian dictatorship and under the general direction of the Soviet government (especially the Commissariat of Education), and of the Russian Communist Party'.[9]

The results of this stern directive were shortly announced in *Pravda* in a letter from the Central Committee:

> The Central Committee of the Party, and by its directive the communist fraction of the recent All-Russian Congress of the Proletcult, have accepted the following resolution:
>
> 1. Basically the mutual relations of the Proletcult and the Commissariat of Education must conform to the resolution of the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party concerning the closest cooperation in the work of both organs.
>
> 2. The creative work of the Proletcult must be a constituent part of the work of the Commissariat of Education as an organ dedicated to the proletarian dictatorship in the domain of culture.

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[8] See 'Khronika sovetskoi literatury za 20 let', *Literaturny kritik*, No. 8, 1937, p. 102.
[9] *Ibid.*, No. 10, p. 103.

3. Accordingly, the central organ of the Proletcult, while accepting an active part in the political and educational work of the Commissariat of Education, occupies the position in it of a department subservient to the Commissariat of Education and directed in its work by a policy which is dictated to the Commissariat by the Russian Communist Party . . .

4. The Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party has instructed the Commissariat of Education to establish and promote conditions which will assure the proletariat the possibility of free creative work in their institutions.[10]

In this resolution the position of the party is made quite clear, as well as the pattern of authority which it will use to control culture. Of course, not all literary endeavour was funnelled through the Proletcult. In fact, the most significant literary work at this time had nothing to do with the Proletcult. It was an organisation that had sought government and party sanction while at the same time insisting upon the freedom to run its affairs as it saw fit. The party's attitude, or more precisely Lenin's, had been enunciated fifteen years before in his article, 'Party Organisation and Party Literature'. And individuals or organisations in the party, or associated with it must take their orders from the party, even though this involved the highly individualistic matter of the creative spirit. But the premise of Lenin's position in 1905, which also obtained to a lesser degree in 1920, was that the recalcitrant writer was free to seek outlets under other auspices. Yet the pattern of control for a part of literature established by this resolution set a precedent for the control of all literature once the power of the party became total and absolute.

THE tradition of freedom for the literary artist, however, quite explicit in Lenin's 1905 article, still troubled the collective conscience of the Central Committee in 1920, for the items in the resolution are followed by an interesting rationalisation. After asserting that various 'petty bourgeois elements' among the intelligentsia had virtually taken control of the Proletcult because of its desire for independence, and that the party had hitherto been unable to do anything about this because of its preoccupation with the fighting on various fronts, the resolution continues:

> These very elements of the intelligentsia, which have attempted in an underhand way to advance their reactionary views in the guise of 'proletarian culture', now set up a noisy agitation against the foregoing resolution of the Central Committee. These elements attempt to interpret the Central Committee resolution as a step which would constrain the workers in their artistic creativeness. This, of course, is not so, The finest elements among the workers of the Proletcult have fully understood the motives which have guided the Central Committee of our party.
>
> The Central Committee does not wish to fetter the initiative of the labouring intelligentsia in the field of artistic creation; on the contrary, it wishes to create for it a more healthy, normal development and to give it the possibility of more fruitfully reflecting itself in all matters of artistic creation. . . .
>
> From the plan of instructions worked out by the Commissariat of Education and endorsed by the Central Committee of our party, all interested comrades will observe that complete autonomy for the reorganisation of the workers' Proletcult in the field of artistic creation will be guaranteed. The Central Committee has issued precise directives on this score for the Commissariat of Education in its activities.[11]

Despite this pledge of 'autonomy', the resolution which the party forced upon the membership of the Proletcult led to the resignation of its leader A. Bogdanov; his place was taken by Pletnev, who stood on a platform of complete submission to the party. Shorn of its independence, the activities and influence of the Proletcult quickly waned, but it had begun a proletarian trend in Soviet literature which was to have many consequences for the future.

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[10] The fourth item in the resolution details the chain of authority as it stems from the Communist Party to the various local and regional organisations of the Proletcult. The Central Committee instruction referred to in para. 5 is not available in print.

[11] 'O proletkultakh. Pismo TsK RKP', *Pravda*, 1 December 1920.

ON the basis of the evidence, it is safe to say that it was primarily Lenin's views which determined the party's attitude in the controversy over the Proletcult in 1920. As we have observed, he had certain definite ideas on proletarian culture and on the relation of the party to belles-lettres. But with that deliberate falsifying of facts and distortion of intention which characterise the party's later treatment of history, Lenin's interest in literature and its functions in the state have been fantastically exaggerated and consciously misused. Since the 1930s, when the myth began to take shape, scores of books and articles have been devoted to exhaustive compilations of everything Lenin wrote and said on art and culture, including much from his works that has little bearing on these subjects; to special studies of his knowledge and use of famous authors of belles-lettres; and even to the listings of the citations from great writers in his works.[12] This culminated in the elevation of Lenin, rather than Marx, as the foremost authority on literature, and his 'Party Organisation and Party Literature' became the central point of reference for all literary critics in the Soviet Union. A not untypical statement of a Soviet scholar in 1951 suggests the dizzy heights of eminence that had been invented for Lenin as a literary authority: 'The significance of the Leninist heritage is also great for the science of literature. . . . The study of Lenin's views on literature enabled Soviet scholars to illuminate anew the most important questions of literary development and played a decisive role in the defeat of hostile theories, which have hampered the mastery of the artistic culture of the past and the construction of a new socialist culture'.[13]

A glance at Lenin's real interests, qualifications, and activities in literary matters, apart from those treated up to this point, will shed some light on the myth-making process designed to establish hallowed authority for a latter-day party policy of regimentation in literature. All the evidence indicates that Lenin was reasonably well read in the principal works of Russian nineteenth century belles-lettres, but much less so in the classics of Western European literature. It was the reading of an educated man whose major interests lay elsewhere and whose time was largely occupied with political science and revolutionary activities. In the exhaustive studies of the total corpus of his works that have been made for this purpose, a rather large number of allusions to and quotations from the authors he read have been culled. But many of these are the familiar references to literary characters and quotations which had entered into the cultural heritage of all educated Russians. In general, they are used by Lenin to illustrate points in his polemical writings.

According to Soviet writers, Lenin's chief claim to eminence as a literary critic rests, apart from his 1905 article, on his seven articles concerning Leo Tolstoy. 'Lenin was the first to give a scientific, profoundly objective, and, at the same time, politically consistent analysis of Tolstoy's works', remarks one Soviet critic.[14] Another comments: 'Lenin's articles on Tolstoy are unsurpassed masterpieces of scientific criticism'.[15] Such assertions exist in abundance, and whenever Lenin's name is invoked as an authority on literary criticism, the articles on Tolstoy are nearly always cited by way of support.

In the thirty-five volumes of the fourth edition of Lenin's works, these seven articles occupy twenty-four pages.[16] The longest article is seven pages, and the other six run from one to five pages in length. They were

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[12] The principal works, which contain bibliographies in these and related subjects, are: Alexander Tseitlin, *Literaturnye tsitati Lenina* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1934); A. Lunacharsky, *Lenin i literaturovedenie* (Moscow, 1934); Mikhail Lifshitz, ed., *Lenin o kulture i iskusstve, 1893–1917* (Leningrad, 1942); Boris Meilakh, *Lenin i problemy russkoi literatury kontsa XIX—nachala XX* vv., 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1951); Clifton E. Hazard, 'Lenin and Literature from an Examination of His Writings' (unpublished Columbia University M.A. Essay, 1953).

[13] Boris Meilakh, op. cit., p. 3.

[14] A. Myasnikov, 'Lenin and the Problems of Literature', *Soviet Literature*, No. 1, 1949, p. 113.

[15] V. Novikov and G. Silkin, 'Lenin and Problems of Culture', *Soviet Literature*, No. 1, 1949, p. 151.

[16] V. I. Lenin, *Sochineniya*, XV, 179–86; XVI, 291–97, 300–02, 323–24, 338–43; XVII, 29–33.

written between 1908 and 1911 (Tolstoy died in 1910), and they are in no sense concerned with an appreciation or aesthetic criticism of the great writer's works—only *Anna Karenina* and the *Kreutzer Sonata* are mentioned in passing. It is Tolstoy as a critic of tsarism that Lenin is interested in, and he uses him as a stick to beat his own political opponents. Yet Lenin condemned Tolstoy as a political and social thinker and accused him of 'humiliating himself in Christ'. However, he admired the brilliant realism of Tolstoy's fiction, especially his pictures of peasant life, which so often revealed the wretched conditions of the people under tsarism. What the Soviet critics single out as the chief contribution of these articles is Lenin's recognition of the contradictions in the works, the views, and in the teachings of Tolstoy, and his analysis of them in an effort to prove that an artist belonging to one class can correctly reflect the life of another class. This view, not at all original with Lenin, assumed much importance in later Soviet theorising on the problem of class determinism in art. However, the few hurried pages of these essentially journalistic articles on Tolstoy, which are only incidentally concerned with his great creative works, do not even deserve the description of 'literary criticism'.

Indeed, had Lenin lived, he would probably have been the first to resent this official party effort to thrust upon him a talent and accomplishment he did not possess. In this respect, he had none of Stalin's colossal arrogance. In commenting upon one of Mayakovsky's poems which satirises party functionaries for wasting time at meetings, Lenin honestly admits his lack of ability as a literary critic and at the same time reveals that literature had a social or political rather than an aesthetic appeal for him.[17]

Like many political radicals, Lenin was an arch conservative in literature. He preferred Pushkin to Mayakovsky,[18] and Klara Zetkin quotes him as saying to her: 'Why should we bow down to the new as to a god whom we must obey simply because he is new? That's nonsense, sheer nonsense! There's much artistic hypocrisy here, and of course an unconscious respect for artistic modes current in the West. We are good revolutionists, yet we feel obliged for some reason to prove that we also stand "at the height of contemporary culture". However, I have the courage to declare myself a "barbarian". I cannot value the works of expressionism, futurism, cubism, and other -isms as the highest manifestations of artistic genius. I don't understand them. They give me no pleasure'.[19]

This may have been an understandable objection on Lenin's part to the extremism of some of the literary groups that sprang up after 1917, the only revolutionary period in literature and art the Soviet Union enjoyed, but it does argue a peculiar lack of sympathy for literary and artistic experimentation. In fact, there is nothing in Lenin's writings that presents a clear picture of what he thought the literature of the future should be in the new socialist state. This is not surprising considering his other interests and manifold activities, but it is surprising for a man regarded by later official critics as the chief preceptor and guide of Soviet literary development.

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[17] V. I. Lenin, 'O mezhdunarodnom i vnutrennom polozhenii Sovetskoi respubliki', *Sochineniya*, XXXIII, 197.

[18] V. Polonsky, *Ocherki literaturnovo dvizheniia revolyutsionnoi epokhi*, p. 84.

[19] Klara Zetkin, *Reminiscences of Lenin* (London, 1929), p. 14.

DIAMAT AND EINSTEIN

The Torment of Relativity

Siegfried Müller-Markus

Recent Soviet technological successes have aroused a good deal of curiosity about Soviet science and the framework in which it operates. We publish below two articles on Soviet philosophy and natural science. Although the subject is of great contemporary interest, there are few studies in the West which throw light on the history of the 'eternal triangle'—philosophy, science and the party—in the Soviet Union. Professor Wetter's classical study deals mainly with the philosophical aspect of the problem; other studies, such as that of A. Vucinich on the Soviet Academy of Sciences, are concerned merely with the organisation (which has been recently changed) of scientific activities in the USSR. Only recently has a book appeared which attempts a comprehensive analysis of the historical background of this 'triangle': David Joravsky, Soviet Marxism and Natural Science *(Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1961).*

This well-documented study, based on painstaking research, destroys some of the more simple ideas about the relation between Soviet political and philosophical struggles in the twenties. But although it gives much detailed information, it brings the story only up to 1932, and does not always succeed in presenting a comprehensive picture of these controversies against the background of party history. Other studies which will follow this pioneering work may perhaps challenge some of its interpretations; but in any case, there is little doubt that sociology of science, political theory, and Kulturgeschichte *can all gain important insights from a factual analysis of the history of Soviet science. In the present state of ignorance on the subject, generalisations unrelated to actual developments are only too easily formulated, myths can flourish unhindered by empirical details, and the previous democratic over-simplifications about totalitarianism 'killing' science can all too easily be replaced by communist ones, such as Roger Garaudy's 'socialism was Gagarin's fuel'.*

The essay by Dr Ahlberg describes the first important dispute about the role of philosophy vis-à-vis science; the essay by Dr. Müller-Markus examines more recent events connected with the destinies of the Relativity Theory in the Soviet Union. The two cases are probably no less revealing, and their implications for Soviet science and ideology more far-reaching, than the incomparably better known Lysenko affair.

IN the Soviet Union a dramatic discussion on the Theory of Relativity has been in progress since 1951. Initially, the theory was most sharply attacked from the angle of party philosophy. In a volume published by the Academy of Sciences on *Philosophical Questions of Modern Physics*,[1] I. Kuznetsov, one of the spokesmen in the polemics against Einstein, asked Soviet physicists to replace Einstein's theory by a new 'materialistic theory'. It was not only the philosophical interpretations given by thinkers in the West that were rejected by Soviet philosophers, but also the principles and consequences of the theory itself.

The attacks on Einstein ended suddenly two years after Stalin's death. In 1955 *Voprosy Filosofii*, the journal of the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow, published the outcome of the discussion until then. It contained the official and almost unqualified recognition of the Theory of Relativity. Academician Maksimov, who had taken up the most radical attitude against the theory, was relieved of his post as editor of *Voprosy Filosofii* and, as far as known, has not published another line since. I. V. Kuznetsov, although compromised in no lesser degree, took Maksimov's place, but since then has not made any further comments on Relativity either. This can be described as a complete victory for the Soviet physicists over the philosophers.

[1] *Filosofskie Voprosy Sovremennoi Fiziki*, Moscow, 1952.

As Relativity had been rejected for years in the name of Dialectical Materialism, the official party doctrine, its triumph necessarily had repercussions on the reputation of this doctrine inside the Soviet Union. To restore that reputation, the Soviet Government decided on a series of drastic steps. Dialectical Materialism has been taught as a compulsory subject in all university faculties of the USSR, and every would-be lecturer in science must pass the examination in philosophy. On the other hand, students of philosophy are required to attend an additional science course. In numerous official publications, Soviet science is asked to bridge the gulf between Natural Science and Dialectical Materialism (or 'Diamat'). Since 1959 there has been a co-ordinating council for co-operation between scientists and philosophers. At the same time so-called Methodological Seminars were started in most universities, whose task it is to solve the philosophical problems of Science, particularly of Physics, in the spirit of the Diamat.

In all of this relativity plays a central part. When an All-Union conference on philosophical questions of science was held in Moscow in October 1958,[2] the most significant contribution made was undoubtedly the attempt by the mathematician and Rector of Leningrad University, A. D. Aleksandrov, to derive the theory anew, free from positivistic admixtures.

The level of philosophic discussion before 1955 was exceptionally low. It was essentially an attempt to force the theory into the Procrustean bed of the Diamat; where this did not work, amputations were performed. After 1955 a fundamental change took place: it was no longer the theory but the Diamat itself that was now subjected to criticism. Officially, of course, this criticism takes the form of reinterpretation of pronouncements of the classics, Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and the result is always 'a brilliant confirmation of the Diamat through Physics'. In reality, however, there has been completely new philosophical development during the last years, which is Diamat in name only; what is actually apparent is a striving towards a modern metaphysics of nature.

[2] Cf. *Survey*, No. 29, pp. 44–53.

The discussion on relativity is thus of great philosophical and general interest. Physics admittedly takes first place among all branches of Soviet science; so the result of the discussion cannot fail to affect the structure of Soviet thought generally.

THE dispute about relativity has deep roots; there are altogether about eight problems that force it into conflict with the Diamat. If we go to the bottom of these problems, we see at once that it is not only the Diamat that has become questionable, but also essential attitudes of our traditional thinking. The Soviet discussion may help us to realise how radical is the innovation which relativity has introduced into our concept of the world.

The Diamat upholds the existence of one single and absolute world substance, namely MATTER. That is reality *per se*, as it presents itself as object of perception and scientific research. Consequently, all research that denies the material nature of the universe is bound to fail. It follows that the Diamat is the only scientific *Weltanschauung*, and every scientist is, consciously or unconsciously, a materialist in his method of research.

Material substance by necessity exists in space and time. Entities which have no existence in space and time are rejected by the Diamat as illusions. To this category belong for instance the human soul and the Platonic Ideas. Space and time form the necessary manner of existence of matter, without which they have no existence. Furthermore, a fundamental attribute of matter is motion. According to Lenin, it is the same whether we say the world is moving matter or the world is material motion. Motion is thus inseparably connected with matter; according to the Diamat there is no absolute rest but only rest as a relative special case of motion. In this sense, motion is considered absolute. Thus the distance between two objects on the earth is constant in certain circumstances, but the earth itself is subject to translation and rotation.

Soviet philosophy has added some simplifying statements to these theses of the classical Diamat as defined by Engels and Lenin. It extended the alleged absoluteness of material substance to space and time and claimed, at

least until 1955, that space and time are absolute entities in the sense of a single absolute universal space and a single absolute universal time. It followed that a body had only a single absolute path and a single absolute velocity with respect to that absolute space and that absolute time. This conception was expounded primarily by A. A. Maksimov. In so doing, Soviet philosophy in fact defended not only pre-Einsteinian but pre-scientific thinking. Actually, on Maksimov's interpretation there should have been an even earlier conflict between Diamat and classical mechanics. For the classical concept of kinetic energy is defined by the relative velocity of two bodies and by an allegedly absolute motion relative to something like an 'absolute space'. Indeed, for the impact of two cars it is quite immaterial whether one car is just parking and the other one has a velocity of a hundred kilometres per hour, or whether both move towards each other at a speed of fifty kilometres per hour. Hundreds of years ago Galileo formulated the so-called classical principle of relativity, according to which laws of nature are the same for a system moving uniformly in a straight line as for a system at rest. The fact that we can have our lunch in a jet aeroplane in the same way as we do at home, despite the enormous motion relative to the earth's surface, may serve to convince us of the validity of this principle. Nevertheless, Soviet philosophy had never protested against this principle before the discussion on relativity.

THIS only changed when Soviet philosophers discovered (albeit with a delay of almost half a century) that modern physics extended Galileo's principle to electrodynamics, where it had tremendous consequences. For Michelson had shown in 1887 that there is no optical experiment to establish the allegedly absolute motion of the earth relative to an aether or something like 'absolute space'. Light waves arrive at the receiver with the same velocity of $c = 300{,}000$ km. per second in a vacuum, irrespective of whether we hurry towards them or are at rest relative to the light source. This situation naturally appears highly paradoxical if we consider light, e.g., as a shower of photons according to Einstein's discovery in 1905, and now demand that they should hit a photographic plate with the same velocity irrespective of the manner in which it moves relative to the source of photons (always assuming that the motion is uniform and in a straight line, that is, 'inertial').

Once this is acknowledged, the concept of absolute space and absolute motion becomes meaningless, at least for inertial motion. There remain only relative movements; but these demolish the said theses of Soviet philosophy. The reaction was indeed rather violent. The surprising fact became apparent that Soviet philosophy was not at all that monolithic structure which it should have been after decades of Soviet ideological dictatorship. On the contrary, philosophers split into a number of conflicting groups which fought each other fiercely. On the other hand, the Soviet physicists formed a united front against the attacks of the philosophers. Even during Stalin's lifetime they offered vigorous resistance, and only one case has become known of a renowned physicist following the philosophers.

Maksimov, the mouthpiece of the most radical wing, went so far as to deny the principle of absoluteness of the velocity of light (Special Relativity), as well as the classical principle of relativity enunciated by Galileo. According to the assessment of the Soviet-Estonian physicist Naan, Maksimov had returned to the pre-Galilean ideas of Ptolemy, Aristotle, and the Scholastics.[3] Maksimov claimed there was in every case only one unique and absolute path with reference to medium, thus defending the idea of an absolute space and absolute motion. Strangely, however, he conceded the validity of the equations of Special Relativity.

This earned the sarcastic observation by Naan that his attitude was the same as if he admitted the validity of the multiplication tables but at the same time denied that $8 \times 11 = 88$. It would also, said Naan, make it impossible to understand by what clever ruse the seaman managed to preserve the ship when its deck had one velocity with respect to the medium air, and its stern a different velocity with respect to the medium water.

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[3] *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1951, 2, p. 73.

What Maksimov could not really grasp was the meaning of the term 'relativity'. He thought he perceived in it philosophical subjectivism, as if the motion of a body was constituted not by objective reality but by the observer. Since Lenin's polemics against the founders of contemporary Positivism (Mach and others), Soviet philosophy has been anxious to deny any influence on the object of observation by the observer. For their dogmatic wing it must remain incomprehensible that a passenger in an express train sees a fruit stone falling to the ground vertically, whereas philosophers still hold views equivalent to those of Ptolemy, according to which the earth forms the only reference frame; except that on this hypothesis they replace the earth by absolute space as the only admissible reference frame. The East German philosopher Stern [4] suggests that the universe is infinite and material and there is therefore an infinite objective and absolute space. Only our ideas about it are relative. But this conflicts as little with its absoluteness as the existence of an absolute truth does with our relative knowledge. According to Stern the relation of the terms 'relative' and 'absolute' has to be treated according to the principles of dialectics: there are indeed relative movements such as that of a body relative to the earth, the solar system, the Milky Way, etc. But these are only dialectical moments on the way to the recognition of absolute motion relative to absolute space.

Even the great Soviet quantum theorist and director of the Nuclear Research Institute in Dubna, Professor Blokhintsev, postulated the existence of an absolute reference frame in 1952. It is true, he argued, we can only approximately realise an inertial system, as no body can be established to be completely free from external forces. Nevertheless, there exists an optimum inertial reference frame which we can the better recognise as knowledge of the universe increases; relative to it there also exists an absolute motion, which only 'philistines of science' deny.[5]

IT was obvious that these ideas were no longer adequate for modern physical knowledge. More progressively-minded Soviet philosophers and physicists tried to incorporate the relativity of motion in the Diamat. Terletski suggested that the interaction of a body with all other bodies of the universe was absolute. Similarly, Bazarov sees something absolute in the relative movement of the body to all other bodies. Hence, absolute motion exists dielectically in the totality of relative motions.

But this way out is philosophically unsatisfactory. The absolute is now understood as the sum total of all individual movements. Their resultant could however—at least hypothetically—equal zero. Apart from that, Hegel uses the term dialectical (subsequently borrowed by the Diamat) not in reference to the arithmetical sum of individual data, but in the sense of an intrinsic self-contradiction within every existing thing. But how could a dialectical contradiction arise between sum and term?

The mathematician and Rector of Leningrad University, A. A. Aleksandrov, makes a more profound approach to the problem. According to him, the relative is only a dialectical moment of the absolute; there are relative movements in physical reality, but these represent a mathematical 'invariant'. In this way even relative motion exhibits the absolute. Unfortunately, even this way out into dialectics is barred. For the opposites 'relative' and 'absolute' are not treated under the same aspect but at different levels. The relative motion of two bodies, provided it is inertial, leaves undecided which of the two bodies is to be considered in motion; in other words, either can be selected as origin of a reference frame.

IF we accept special relativity, far-reaching physical consequences follow. The mass of a rocket moving towards the earth very fast appears greater measured on the earth, its length in the direction of flight shorter, and its clocks move more slowly than before the start. The passenger in the rocket, however, notices nothing of these changes. For him it is the mass, clock time, and dimension of the earth that change; the mass increases, the earth flattens, and earth clocks go more slowly.

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[4] *Ibid.*, 1952, 1, pp. 175–81.
[5] *Ibid.*, 1952, 1, pp. 182–83.

These effects are clearly verified, for instance, by the increase in mass of highly accelerated electrons (up to 3,000 times the mass at rest), and the increase in the life of mesons in cosmic radiation. According to the judgment of the most highly esteemed Soviet theoretical physicist, V. A. Fok, to deny the special theory of relativity which predicts just those effects, is as absurd as to deny the spherical shape of the earth. Its acceptance, however, makes great demands on human understanding.

It follows from the relativity of time that two events which are simultaneous for the observer on earth cease to be so for the rocket passenger. In the West, too, this effect was the object of long debate, and is not accepted even now by some philosophers (like Nikolai Hartmann). The relativity of mass, length, and duration necessitates indeed a revision of our traditional concepts.

Soviet philosophy did not make these revisions before 1955 for two reasons. One, Soviet philosophers were—wrongly as we know—afraid that the recognition of relative properties would open the flood gates to philosophical Idealism. The properties would, so they thought, become dependent on the act of recognition. It would depend on the standpoint of the observer whether, say, a rocket had a certain length, mass, and time on its clock. Soviet philosophy rejects this idea as absurd.

Maksimov wrote that Einstein denies the objectivity of length, duration, and simultaneousness. But this is incompatible with their real existence; in no circumstances could a change of reference frame cause contraction of length, retardation of time, or increase in mass. 'Real changes of properties', Maksimov argued, 'could only be brought about by real causes, that is by real interaction of a body with other bodies'. Einstein had deserted the 'materialistic' outlook of Newton, who attributed all changes to acting forces, and replaced them by an agreement regarding the methods of measurement.

Einstein defines simultaneousness by the simultaneous arrival of light signals in the middle of the separation between light sources. According to Maksimov this leads to the use of different measures by observers moving relative to each other. It is obvious, Maksimov wrote, that the measurement of one and the same length and duration from different inertial reference frames with the aid of different measures for space and time leads to numerically different results. The number which expresses the length of a rod which is observed from a coordinate system moving at a certain speed relative to the coordinate system attached to the rod works out smaller, not because the rod actually contracts, but because in the moving coordinate system a measure of length is used, which in its absolute extension is greater than the same measure in the system attached to the rod.[6]

As a logical consequence of this reasoning, Maksimov denied the relativity of the attributes. Even during the life of Stalin this earned him the reproach of Fok that he had committed philosophical and physical errors that cried to heaven. It is significant that Fok published his attacks in the journal *Voprosy Filosofii*, then still edited by Maksimov, under the heading: 'Against ignorant criticism of modern physical theories'. When relativity was recognised in 1955, Maksimov was accused of philosophical subjectivism. This seems a harsh verdict when one considers that it was on behalf of party philosophy that Maksimov had denied the relativity of the attributes as relativism and subjectivism.

INDEED, Soviet philosophy cannot recognise any relativity of attributes without denying itself. As has already been said, there is a reason for this in the ontology of the Diamat. In reference to this problem Ovchinnikov, the official expert on Soviet philosophy of science, investigated the question of physical *relation* at the conference on philosophical questions of modern physics in Kiev in 1954. According to him, physical relation is a form of connection between objects and phenomena, and a connection that is always real and material. In this context shared attributes of objects are assumed, for pure relations have no reality. Therefore, it is wrong to let length and duration of bodies be determined by their relation to a reference frame. 'If we speak of the alteration of length of a moving rod or more

[6] *Ibid.*, 1953, 1, p. 191.

clearly still of the mass of a body, then mass and length are attributes of the body itself, whilst the angle of subtense is merely an attribute of the relation '.[7]

For this reason the increase in mass represents an actual change and not only a perspective effect, as for instance the apparent shortening of a rod whilst being removed from the observer. Only under these conditions does the law of conservation of mass retain its validity. Otherwise, V. Shugailin reasoned (following Ovchinnikov), a body would have an infinity of lengths and durations, namely as many as there are bodies moving relative to it. But this would mean that length and duration are not essential attributes of matter, nothing belonging to it. 'This obviously contradicts Dialectical Materialism'.[8]

The Soviet philosophers recognised the great significance of the problem, but they drew the same conclusion as is found in a remark by Hegel: when he was asked by one of his pupils why the professor of Natural Science was saying the opposite to what the philosopher Hegel was teaching, he replied, 'so much the worse for Nature'. Soviet philosophy did not hesitate to proceed on the same lines. In no circumstances could it sacrifice the Diamat. Consequently, it was relativity that had to be revised.

And indeed, in the official publication of the Academy of Sciences, *Philosophical Questions of Modern Physics*, the philosophers Kuznetsov and Shteinman presented a new 'materialistic' theory of relativity. This was designed to avoid any reference to relativity of attributes, and was therefore to be called 'Theory of Rapid Motions'. This new theory was from then onward to be taught in Soviet textbooks. Einstein was accused of falsifying the true development of physics under the influence of his teacher, the positivist Mach; whatever truth was contained in his theory was due not to him but to physicists like Lorentz, Umov, Langevin and others. Indeed, it is characteristic of the conceptions of Shteinman and Kuznetsov that they went back to pre-relativistic ideas in physics. Nowhere does the reactionary attitude of Soviet philosophy manifest itself so clearly as in this attempt.

According to Shteinman and Kuznetsov, a body at any time has only one true value of its mass, length, and duration. This value however is variable. It is determined by the physical relations of a body to the field of force. The authors draw on Lorentz's theory of the electrodynamic nature of mass, according to which the mass of electrically charged relativistic effects are based on real changes in moving bodies. This does not contradict the equations of relativity but gives them a different interpretation: there exist in reality two theories of relativity, one idealistic and one materialistic.

This new theory was rejected outright by the Soviet physicists. Fok wrote in 1953 that Kuznetsov mistook the brilliantly verified theory of Einstein for an idealistic creation, thus making idealism a present of it. 'By calling on us to reject one of the most important achievements of physics in our century, and in fact to turn back the wheel of history to an epoch already past, the opponents of relativity are leading our scientists and students astray. It makes us particularly indignant to see their reactionary anti-scientific opinions presented in the name of Dialectical Materialism. Apart from anything else, they are doing extraordinary harm to the dissemination of the ideas of Dialectical Materialism among the Peoples Democracies . . . Nothing is more alien to the tasks of progressive Soviet science than the ignorant criticism of these theories'.[9]

AT the Kiev conference Rozentsveig publicly called the new theory a pitiable beggar's broth brewed together by Shteinman. The bankruptcy of the Diamat in a decisive point had become visible. The immediate consequence was the official recognition of relativity in 1955 and Maksimov's downfall.

The progressive wing among Soviet thinkers again split into two groups. To the first belonged Bazarov and Charin, and to the second

[7] *Filosofskie Voprosy Sovremennoi Fiziki* (Kiev, 1956), p. 207.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 214.
[9] *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1953, 1, p. 174.

Fok, A. D. Aleksandrov, B. G. Kuznetsov and Kard.

The first group is again trying to interpret the situation in dialectical terms. According to Bazarov, there are two kinds of relations, kinematic and dynamic. The former leads to quantitative changes in the properties of the bodies, the latter to qualitative changes. This does not mean that these properties are generated by the relations, but only that they are made manifest by them. Physical quantities are not, as Eddington thinks, something manufactured by our operations. According to Bazarov, the deciding fact is that the properties are not generated by the relations but only imaged in them. The contraction in length and increase in mass are therefore no fiction but reflect the real kinematic relations of objects. The observer has nothing to do with it; relative magnitudes too are objective.[10]

For Charin the effects depend on an objective and in this sense absolute fact, namely, that of relative motion. This is the objective factor. The subjective one consists in the simultaneous dependence of the effects on subjective choice of units and methods of measurement. This establishes the dialectical unity of 'subjective' and 'objective'.[11]

Fok and Aleksandrov, on the other hand, see in relativity only a consequence of the absolute structure of space and time. This is so arranged, that the velocity of light *c* remains the same for all inertial systems. As *c* represents the relation between space and time, a universal connection between space and time is thereby implied. Thence follow the relativistic effects with logical necessity; this has nothing to do with any material causes.

If one follows up this thesis to its logical conclusion, one finds a new form of physical causality. Indeed, it is not dynamic causes, so-called forces, that are responsible for the relativistic effects, but the structure of space and time, that is, a geometric order. This earned even Fok and Aleksandrov the reproach from Kuznetsov, at the conference in Kiev in 1954, that they were materialists in name only; in reality they made the Aristotelean 'form' the physical cause of the behaviour of matter.

[10] *Ibid.*, 1952, 6, pp. 175–85.
[11] *Ibid.*, 1954, 4, pp. 194–201.

For Kard there exists no true length of a body at all, but only changing projections of an absolute space-time continuum upon an arbitrary reference space. A body has no separate existence in space and time but only simultaneously in both. Separated from its existence in time, a body has no independent reality at all but only a kind of shadow existence. Length and duration of a body are real but not autonomous.

B. G. Kuznetsov, finally, investigates the notion of the 'actual' from a mathematical standpoint. He comes to the conclusion that the distance between two bodies, and thereby also their size, are nothing actual in the mathematical sense, as the purely spatial distance assumes different values through choice of different parameters, that is, through different correspondences with number manifolds. Size and duration are therefore not actual attributes but figurative.

Taken to its logical conclusion, it follows that we can no longer consider length, duration, and mass to be properties of a body, but magnitudes that are determined both by the body itself and by the choice of parameters, that is, in physical terms, by measurement. This implies a denial of any kind of fundamental substance in physics. The more advanced Soviet philosophers have recognised this implication, but failed to draw the proper conclusions. When they will do so can only be a question of time.

A FURTHER problem is the relation between mass and energy. The situation is as follows: from the Special Theory of Relativity, Einstein derived the formula

$$E = mc^2$$

where E represents the energy, m the mass, and c^2 the square of the velocity of light. In agreement with this equation, an electron and a positron change on impact into two light quanta and helium is built from heavy hydrogen, whereby the energy of the nuclear bond in the new nucleus is supplied by a mass defect of the initial nuclei. Einstein and other physicists drew the conclusion from this that all matter in its essence is to be considered energy.

But Engels and Lenin thought that energy was nothing but matter in motion. Lenin

therefore decidedly rejected Ostwald's theory, according to which energy is to be regarded as the world substance. For, according to Lenin, there can be no motion without the material carrier. On this there was a discussion among Soviet scientists in 1952, which culminated in a meeting of the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow on 13 May 1952, and in the special edition of *Uspekhi Fizicheskikh Nauk* (Successes of the Physical Sciences) 1952, vol. 48, 2. The following viewpoints emerged:

(1) *Orthodox party philosophy*, represented by Suvorov, Shteinman, I. V. Kuznetsov. According to Kuznetsov, mass is a fundamental attribute of matter on which depend all other attributes. Nevertheless, it is not absolute, innate, and unchangeable, as is shown by relativity. Nor is it to be equated with matter itself, as matter possesses infinitely many attributes. Energy is a form of motion, for which reason different forms of motion (= kinds of energy) can be transformed into each other. The conservation of energy expresses the indestructibility of material motion. These theses prohibit a transformation of energy into mass and vice versa. In the case of a mass defect no mass is transformed into energy, but a material field of force is radiated, for the field of force, too, is a reality and therefore matter. Even in the case of radiation, material particles are transformed into photons, that is, again, material particles. Even light is not pure energy but matter. Suvorov and Shteinman think similarly.

(2) *The progressive group of philosophers*, Riazanov and Izmailov, do not understand by 'matter' a kind of original substance which assumes different forms according to the combination of its elements, but the real objects themselves. As there is no original substance, the expression 'quantity of matter' represents no quantity of material but simply the ability of objects to transform into other objects. As universal measure of transformability either mass or energy may be taken. This follows from the thesis of the Diamat regarding the unity of matter and motion. The formula $E = mc^2$ characterises the total transformability of one physical system into another.

(3) *Ovchinnikov* occupies a special place. Until 1957 he belonged to the orthodox group of philosophers, but since then he has represented an interpretation of the situation which in fact accepts just that dynamism which had been rejected by Lenin. According to Ovchinnikov, the inert mass of a body is only the negative expression of its motion. This shows itself in the resistance which it offers to an accelerating force. This thesis dates back to Engels. Consequently, mass is merely the indicator of the motion, which intrinsically belongs to every body. This motion is only liberated during the change of particles into photons or energy of nuclear bond. There is no equivalence of mass and energy either, but only a simultaneous conservation of energy and mass in every physical process. If one takes these theses of Ovchinnikov to their logical conclusion, one sees that the matter of the Diamat has dissolved into motion—precisely that development which Soviet philosophy had endeavoured to avoid.

(4) *The energists.* Numerous important Soviet physicists openly stood for energism until 1952. They have been silent since. They took as basis Lenin's thesis that matter had no attributes other than being a reality independent of consciousness. Now energy is certainly real. Furthermore, it looks as though it could be considered as the basic substance of all physical phenomena. What then prevents us from regarding energy as matter? This view was represented most clearly by the great physicist Ioffe; other physicists defended a transformation of matter into energy, among them Roginski, Shpolski, Frank-Kamenetski, Kapustinski, and Vavilov. They were all attacked by the official group of philosophers, and in 1952 energism was officially condemned.

(5) *The progressive group of physicists* includes Fok, Frish, Shpolski, and Terletski. Most significant are the ideas of Terletski and Fok. These are the foremost Soviet physicists. Terletski said at the meeting of the Institute of Philosophy on 13 May 1952, that physics today knows of no law of conservation of matter at all, and the thesis of the Marxist classics on the conservation of matter is obsolete. This was a grave attack on the Diamat. Fok interprets the law $E = mc^2$ to say that in the majority of physical and chemical processes

the mass remains conserved only because the portions transformed into energy are not measurable. He therefore speaks in this case of an active mass that is equal to an active energy. However, during processes of radiation and nuclear fusion, part of the passive energy is transformed into active energy. If one takes Fok's interpretation to its conclusion, it follows that physical reality fundamentally consists of two basic states, an active one and a passive one. We may describe both states as mass or equally well as energy. Now the notion of energy is obviously the more general one. Therefore it is possible to say: physical reality is by its nature active and passive energy. There is no further mention of the material nature of the world.

WE have now to consider the question of justification of relativity. Einstein started with the question, in what sense could one speak at all of two events as being simultaneous? He found that we depend on certain methods of measurement in which light signals play a decisive part. Now the light arrives with the same velocity with respect to every inertially moving observer; consequently it depends on the position of the observer whether we consider two events as simultaneous or not. Simultaneousness is relative. From this the remaining effects of Special Relativity follow.

This led the Soviet philosophers to the opinion that Einstein ignored the problem of actual simultaneousness but concerned himself with the method of measurement only; the properties of bodies and events were created only by subjective measurement. According to Maksimov this is a typical attitude of positivism and operationalism. It is not so much the question, writes I. V. Kuznetsov, how one defines simultaneousness, but whether such a definition is true. A physical quantity is not defined by a recipe for its measurement; time is not what the hand of my watch indicates. The physicist cannot construct any valid recipes of measurement by himself but only take them from nature. On these lines Soviet philosophy ranted against the great Soviet physicist Mandelshtam, already dead at that time. Mandelshtam had said that no *a priori* concept of simultaneousness exists. What simultaneousness is, can only be defined but never known. But this is the purist conventionalism, said I. V. Kuznetsov; it means the reduction of physical processes to manipulations of the observer. And on these grounds Mandelshtam's idea was officially condemned in 1952.

It is characteristic that, so far as is known, all philosophers in the USSR agree on this point. We find an elementary urge towards objectivism. An attempt to give a new and strictly objectivistic derivation of the Theory of Relativity is found in Fok's book, *The theory of space, time, and gravitation,* and Aleksandrov's paper, read at the All-Union conference in 1958 on philosophy and science.

Neither starts fom the measurement of physical magnitudes such as simultaneousness, but from the structure of space and time. This structure is fixed by the law of the constancy of light velocity. Fok, therefore, derives the effects from the spreading of a light-wave front in a homogeneous isotropic space. In consequence of the equivalence of mass and energy, the light is deflected from its straight path in the neigbourhood of inert masses in space, which causes a bending of the path of radiation out of Euclidian space. Aleksandrov consequently calls the Theory of Relativity the 'theory of the structure of absolute space-time'. In it geometry represents the space-time relationships of the material world. These relations are realised by electromagnetic interactions, as they exist between all physical bodies in the universe.

They form a kind of radiation background which has nothing to do with the antiquated idea of an absolute and immobile world aether. Therefore one can legitimately determine simultaneousness with the aid of light-signals. The co-ordination of a body with any reference body is thus a real fact, and has nothing to do with the subjective choice of the observer. If one abstracts the notion of a radiation field from its concrete contents, one obtains space-time in its abstract, purely formal shape. Seen from here, the world may be looked upon as a manifold of events. Through the world lines of light the relations between events are fixed. The system of relationship between consecutive

events coincides with the structure of four-dimensional Euclidian space-time. That in turn is identical with the general causal structure of the world, for no event can be the consequence of another event, if the transmission of effect had to be faster than the velocity of light.

Although it is unfortunately impossible to present Aleksandrov's interpretation in detail here, it may be stated that it represents a tremendous rise in the standard of Soviet philosophic thinking. Granted that it only paves the way for a new and deepened analysis of the essence of the physical world, Soviet philosophy will in all probability undertake this analysis as soon as the antiquated model of the Diamat is no longer compulsory. Then indeed one may be prepared for great surprises.

FINALLY, let us mention the fundamental problem of finiteness of the universe. If space-time or space alone has curvature, one is led on to assume a closed and consequently finite cosmos. Some long-known cosmological paradoxes also suggest finiteness of the universe, as for instance that the sky is dark at night, and the sum total of gravitation in space has a finite value, which would hardly be thinkable in the case of an infinite mass of radiating stars or heavy masses. There is further the well-known observation of a red shift in the spectrum of distant galaxies, which led Hubble to the assumption of an expanding universe. But the Diamat teaches infinity of matter with respect to space, time, and mass as an unchallengeable dogma. To abandon these postulates would mean the death of the communist philosophy, for the gate to belief in God would then be reopened. So Soviet philosophers passionately opposed the theories of an expanding or closed universe. They spoke of a 'cancerous growth in science' and 'irreconcilable enemy of the Diamat'. The problem proved so burning, however, that Soviet astronomers turned to it with marked devotion. Since 1951 a special cosmogonic conference has been convened each year to deal with questions of origin of stars, finiteness of the universe, and origin of elements. After searching studies, the Soviet astronomers, guided by the great scientist Ambartsumian, arrived in 1957 at recognition of expansion of the universe.

They were led to this conclusion by the observations of radio-astronomy. Officially, it is merely recognised that only that part of the universe which is observed by us is expanding, but Soviet astronomers, too, know very well that there is not the slightest indication why the observed expansion should not encompass the whole universe.

Even philosophers like Sviderski now speak of the possibility of a finite total mass of the universe. Melyukhin postulates an infinitely long existence of matter but thinks that only a finite part of the time known to us could have elapsed. Sviderski admits that physical time has a beginning, but argues that before it there were events belonging to a different type of time. Both see something irrational in the idea of infinity. By 'infinite' they merely understand the real and in this sense absolute existence of matter.

Nowhere does the collapse of the Diamat become so manifest as in the words of the Soviet mathematician and philosopher E. Kolman (a Czech by origin) at the 6th cosmological conference in July 1957 [12]: Whoever quotes Engels as an authority when claiming eternity for the universe, must be aware that Engels postulated an eternal change of worlds in time from the simultaneous existence of innumerable worlds in infinite space. But this conclusion is based on the state of astronomical science nearly a hundred years ago. Kolman himself inclines to the idea of an open universe, but says that 'this question cannot be solved on the strength of sympathies and antipathies; the possibility of both models has to be thoroughly investigated within the framework of the Diamat. It is high time that we philosophers got out of the bad habit of resorting to appeals, gave up the tendency to decide difficult scientific questions by sticking labels on them, stopped rushing in with generalisations that are not based on solid knowledge, avoid operating with a club, where the surgeon's scalpel should be used . . .' [13]

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[12] Cf. *Survey*, No. 23, pp. 66–71.
[13] *Voprosy Kosmogonii*, vol. 7.

Philosophic thinking in the USSR has unquestionably entered a new epoch, inaugurated largely by the collapse of party ideology confronted by relativity. A new attitude has already emerged among the philosophers. Among scientists it is rarely permitted to make prophecies. But in this case we have grounds on which to base the hope that Russian science will experience a resurrection of the spirit in the not too distant future.

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FORGOTTEN PHILOSOPHER

The Work of Abram Deborin

René Ahlberg

ABRAM MOISEYEVICH DEBORIN, born in Kovno in Lithuania, the child of poor Jewish parents, belongs unjustly to the forgotten philosophers. He became known in the twenties as the exponent of an individual brand of Marxism, orientated in method towards Hegel, and his own work is intimately bound up with the development of Soviet philosophy. Until the condemnation of his dialectical philosophy in 1931 he was considered the leading Soviet philosopher and was often mentioned in the same breath as Lenin. And Lenin himself included Deborin's first book, *Introduction to the philosophy of dialectical materialism* (written in 1908 and published in 1916 by Plekhanov), among those works which he considered worth thorough study. His *Philosophical Remains* (published by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow in 1932) contains extracts and marginalia—not always friendly—which reveal his interest in this first Russian exposition of Marxist philosophy.

Today Deborin and his philosophical work are almost completely forgotten. Although he was elected to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1935—that is, after his philosophy had been condemned—and remained there as secretary of the Department for History and Philosophy, the traces of his own activities have been almost completely eliminated from all Soviet philosophical publications. The new Soviet Encyclopedia devotes only a few unkind lines to this philosopher, who is today living in retirement in Moscow.

The sources for his biography are therefore very scanty and dry up completely after his condemnation. His life until 1931 is documented in works of reference; his life since then can only be inferred from occasional references to his membership of scientific institutions and from the very few of his writings published. As there is no accurate information about his life any account must depend on what is said in a few reference books and on unconfirmed remarks in the literature on the subject.

Deborin left a government Jewish school in Kovno in 1897 and learnt the trade of locksmith. It was in Kovno, too, probably, that he first came into contact with a revolutionary movement. It is probable that at the end of 1899, because of revolutionary activities, he moved to the more remote Kherson in order to escape the attentions of the police. There is evidence of his revolutionary activity there. Like most of the young intellectuals who were later to become prominent in the revolution, he joined an illegal revolutionary circle and in this group of eagerly debating revolutionaries he laid the foundations of his political and philosophical convictions. But he was soon expelled from Kherson also and returned to his native town.

In Kovno he was overtaken by the fate of all Russian revolutionaries. He was arrested for treasonable activities and, after a conditional release, placed under police supervision. A year later he escaped from this by fleeing to Switzerland. In Berne, where he spent several years, he joined the Lenin wing of the Russian social democrats. At the same time he completed his education at the University in Berne, where he studied history and philosophy. His contributions to the Stuttgart social-democratic periodical *Die Neue Zeit*, which fall into this period, in style and content already show all the characteristic features of his later thought.

In his first articles—which incidentally were written in German—the influence of the Hegelian dialectic is unmistakable. The effect of the encounter with Hegel was so profound that at times he falls victim to the mania of many young Hegel enthusiasts and seems determined to force all political events into the Hegelian categories.

His astonishingly wide reading, apparent even in his first writings, later also gave direction to his philosophy. His extensive knowledge of

pre-Marxist philosophy led him to attempt on the one hand to place Marxism in the historical development of philosophical ideas since Spinoza and, on the other hand—in accordance with the Hegelian triad—to interpret it as the great synthesis of the materialist philosophy of the 18th century with the dialectical elements of German idealism. Marx's achievement in doing this he regarded as the fusion, accomplished for the first time, of the concepts of 'matter' and 'dialectic' into a unified dynamic philosophy.

A far-ranging preoccupation with the history of philosophy very soon led Deborin to the conviction that Marxism could become an historical force only if—again completely in the Hegelian manner—it absorbed all the progressive elements of pre-marxist philosophy. According to this interpretation the essence of Marxism could only fulfil itself by preserving all the lasting cognitions of the human spirit. Full of this idea, Deborin did not tire of exploring French, English, and especially German philosophy for materialist and dialectical elements.

IT is therefore not surprising that the central theme of his first work, written in exile, is the dialectic. He began to prepare a history of the dialectic, tracing it from Spinoza through Kant, Fichte and Hegel to Marx, which is as characteristic of his work as his later attempt at systematisation in the realm of the natural sciences.

Given this interpretation of Marxism, it was only logical that Deborin, in spite of all his respect for Lenin's political and organising genius, should not attribute any special importance to his philosophy. The bolshevik version of a 'Leninist *stage*' of philosophy found no place in his far-ranging speculations. Among Russian Marxists he felt a bond only with that kindred spirit G. V. Plekhanov. To support his ideas he always refers to Plekhanov alone and makes him his chief witness. Lenin, on the other hand, appears in Deborin's work only as the great theoretician of the Revolution.

This philosophical development—in addition to political differences—helps to explain why Deborin parted company with the Bolsheviks in 1907 and joined the Mensheviks. The suggestion that his break with the Lenin wing arose as a result of far-reaching differences of opinion is supported by the fact that after the October Revolution he continued to remain in the ranks of the Menshevik Party and joined the Bolshevik Party only very much later—in 1928.

In 1908 Deborin returned to Russia. In the years that followed he led the restless, roving life of all Russian professional revolutionaries, which took him to, among other places, Warsaw, St. Petersburg, and Poltava. The accounts of the influence of the October Revolution on his political convictions contradict one another. Some sources claim that he made a complete break with Menshevism—Deborin himself also put it this way—while others maintain that he continued to be a member of the Menshevik Party. The only undisputed fact is that, after a short political interlude as chairman of the Poltava city Soviet in 1917, he retired from active political life and devoted himself to teaching.

He taught at the Sverdlov University in Moscow and among the many honours bestowed on him were membership of the Institute of Red Professors, the Marx-Engels Institute, and the Communist Academy. In addition to his teaching activities he devoted himself to publishing the most important works of materialist philosophy. He edited for the 'Library of Materialists' and the 'Library of Atheism' the works of Holbach, Helvetius, Lamettrie, Toland, Diderot, and Hobbes. The complete edition of Hegel that he had planned—suspended in 1930—was intended, together with the works of Feuerbach, which he had already edited, to make the two most important forerunners of Marxist philosophy accessible to the Russian reader.

Deborin was torn from these teaching and editing activities in the mid-twenties by a philosophical discussion which resulted from his interpretation of Marxism and drew him again into political controversy.

IN the first half of the twenties the principles of Marxist philosophy had by no means been fully elaborated. After the liberating experience of the Revolution the most dissimilar materialist currents had formed an essentially emotional alliance. All these philosophical movements were drawn towards one another by the feeling

that they were called upon to provide spiritual guidance for the revolutionary materialist society. Each of the sects worked more or less in the conviction that the new world which had to be built would correspond to its ideals; and none took too seriously the contradictory utterances of the others. Before the great practical task theoretical differences faded into insignificance.

This apparent unanimity in the early phase of the Revolution was shaken for the first time in 1922 by the appearance of a programmatic article by O. Minin, a fairly primitive materialist who demanded the liquidation of philosophy in the Soviet Union. He started by saying that Soviet philosophy was a bourgeois survival and must be replaced by the positive sciences. This article was followed in quick succession by a number of articles and pamphlets, written by materialist-minded natural scientists, who were unanimous in their demand that the remnants of philosophy should be replaced by the positive sciences.

These vociferous demands naturally brought opponents onto the scene. 'Vulgar' Materialism, as this crude version was called, was spreading so fast and gaining so much influence, particularly among students, that even Bukharin, then the Party's chief ideologist, was forced to deal with this phenomenon. In 1923 he intervened in the controversy and sharply condemned Vulgar Materialisim.

At Bukharin's side there was Deborin, who contributed a series of brilliant articles attacking Vulgar Materialism. His opposition, however, was expressed less in criticism of its theoretical premises than in the elaboration of a philosophically orientated programme, which by its scope alone made Vulgar Materialism appear intellectually provincial.

The theoretical resources of the Vulgar Materialists were insufficient for a serious controversy. The movement—which apart from O. Minin, centred particularly on the biologist Emmanuel S. Enchmen, who preached a peculiar form of philosophy, which he tried to reduce to biology—was soon replaced by a number of persons who had to be taken seriously. Among them—to name only the most influential—were Ivan Ivanovich Skvortsov-Stepanov (1870-1928), Arkadi Klement Timiriazev (1880-1955), the son of the famous Russian physiologist, and Liubov Isaakovna Akselrod (1868-1946). The new movement differed both from its Vulgar Materialist precursors and from the mechanical materialism of the 18th century. To distinguish themselves from their predecessors, its members called themselves *mechanistic* materialists.

The mechanistic group carried on the traditions of Vulgar Materialism in a very different form. It disputed the right of philosophy to exist in a socialist society with the following argument: just as, after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Russian society had conquered all the irrational and blind forces whose victim it had been during the bourgeois capitalist phase of its history, and had established a rational, controlled, and planned social order, so it must free itself from all 'philosophical rubbish' in the realms of science and culture to make way for the positive sciences. Only by abandoning all philosophical fictions, the Mechanists believed, would the transition from the old bourgeois society to a new scientific epoch of history be completed.

They were thus trying to establish a scientific *Weltanschauung*, which was to be derived from summarising and elucidating the findings of the positive sciences. In explaining all material and spiritual phenomena they adopted a strict determinism and strongly denied the right to existence of a philosophy distinct from the individual sciences. Analysis was the method by which they hoped to penetrate to the ultimate mysteries of being, and since, for them, the laws of the microcosm applied also to the macrocosm, they believed that by penetrating into the smallest particles they would be able to solve general problems of nature and society. A universalist method, such as the dialectic, seemed to them to be simply scholasticism.

IN the summer of 1925 the Mechanists began openly attacking 'bourgeois survivals' in the Soviet Union. The occasion was furnished by Ryazanov's edition of Engels' *Dialectics of Nature*, which was published in 1925. Stepanov published a commentary on this book in which he maintained that Engels had proved that in socialist society only exact science remained.

The dialectic of which Engels spoke was nothing but a familiar theory of evolution.

But Deborin, against whom Stepanov's article was directed, could with good reason cite Engels in his defence; after all, it was precisely in this book that Engels had tried to make the dialectic the necessary methodological foundation of the natural sciences. The controversy between Deborin and Stepanov therefore began over the question of the place Engels attributed to the dialectic in the natural sciences and to philosophy in a socialist society.

Engels' unfinished work, which exists only as a fragment, grotesquely enough provided both parties with a justification of their position. The contradictions and numerous intellectual ambiguous passages produced a situation in which both sides fought for years on end over the meaning of individual sentences and phrases. When Deborin appeared to be getting the upper hand the Mechanists began to divide Engels' intellectual development into two phases. They asserted that a part of the notes dated from a period when Engels was still caught up in bourgeois philosophical prejudices: Deborin could be referring only to these immature and pre-scientific passages. In the second stage of his development Engels had understood his mistakes and had tried to eliminate philosophy and dialectics from the natural sciences.

From this point of view the quarrel between Deborin and the Mechanists can be regarded as a controversy over the views of Engels. Marx was allowed almost no say at all. His ideas were unambiguously expressed and hardly referred to the question under dispute. But Engels, in whose work materialist and idealist traditions were only very loosely interwoven, and who had died while trying to expand the historical materialism of his friend Marx into a comprehensive dialectical materialism, had left behind a great quarry from which Deborinists and Mechanists could help themselves to powerful arguments. The fact that Deborin and his views finally prevailed did not remove the stumbling-block. The ambivalence of this work of Engels later provided the natural scientists of the Soviet Union with effective quotations to defend themselves against the attempt to fetter research by dogmatic philosophy.

To the mechanistic interpretation of Engels, which in its extreme form was tantamount to the abolition of philosophy and dialectics as subjects to be studied and taught in the Soviet Union, Deborin opposed his idea of the inseparable link between the philosophy of dialectical materialism and a socialist order of society. According to this the guarantee for a scientifically planned society lay entirely in a scientifically worked out philosophy, whose function it was to prepare rules and norms by which society, state, and politics could be directed. The denial of Marxist philosophy as the supreme court of appeal would inevitably emasculate Soviet society.

Deborin emphasised that, historically, philosophy had always been one of the most important elements of state and society, and that therefore socialist society too must, for good or ill, remain bound up with Marxist philosophy. Without a clear theoretical concept of the future ordering of society there could be no purposeful quest for it in practical politics. Without responsible and scientific control of social and political development by philosophy, everything remained at the mercy of arbitrary, spontaneous impulses. With similar arguments he attacked the demand for the absolute autonomy of the positive sciences. The call for a self-sufficient science was to him synonymous with the renunciation of Marxist philosophy. For he was convinced that the natural sciences too were irrevocably bound by certain philosophical assumptions. They revealed their hidden workings only when the results were interpreted. As philosophy and science were inescapably coupled, the connection would have to be admitted, explicitly recognised, and utilised to control the results; and as the sciences could not free themselves completely from philosophical implications it was the task of the scientific philosophy of Marxism to act as incorruptible conscience and to fight unscientific undercurrents in the sciences.

He opposed particularly violently the attempt to eliminate the dialectic as methodological basis in the natural sciences. Closely following Hegel, he considered the dialectical method to be logic, ontology, and theory of cognition in one. To suppress it in the individual sciences

meant for him to give up a uniform and complete order of being. And since, for him, the dialectic represented an ontological principle governing all realms of life, its elimination from the natural sciences would lead to methodological confusion in which the results of research in the individual sciences would inevitably be frittered away and could no longer be integrated into a self-contained whole.

FOR five years (1925–29) the controversy between the Deborinists and the Mechanists revolved around these questions. Much ink was spilt on both sides, but neither party retreated. The Deborinists, who included Y. E. Sten, N. A. Karev, B. N. Gessen, V. F. Asmus, I. K. Luppol, I. I. Agol, M. L. Levin, I. F. Podvolotski, S. Levit, F. Telezhnikov, S. Novikov and many others, during these years became widely known as the ' dialectical school '. They agreed among themselves on the things they published, quoted each other, and for the rest followed their leader without question.

Their main organisational support, apart from scientific institutes and universities—where according to contemporary reports they held almost all the key positions—came from the Society of Militant Materialists, founded in 1924. In 1928 this society amalgamated with a splinter group under the name of Society of Militant Materialists and Dialecticians. In 1929 the Society, directed by Deborin, already had an organisational network which covered almost the whole of Russia. Its object, as Deborin put it, was ' to organise the systematic investigation of the Hegelian dialectic from the standpoint of Marxism '. With this aim in view the Society initiated a Hegelian renaissance in the Soviet Union, which very soon degenerated into a Hegel cult.

The publicity organ of the Deborinists was the periodical *Under the Banner of Marxism* (1922–44), which was translated into several languages and whose chief editor from 1926 to 1930 was Deborin. It had a direct influence on the course of the controversy as almost all disputed questions were discussed in it. Although until 1930 the journal followed the Deborinist line, it did not close its columns to its philosophical opponents. It was run in such a way that the most divergent points of view could find relatively free expression in it.

Although Deborin was appointed editor-in-chief only in 1926, his influence is apparent in all leading articles of the preceding years. With a few exceptions, all his writings after the Revolution appeared in this journal and they alone gave it the unmistakable stamp which soon made it into a concept in the intellectual life of the Soviet Union. Deborin wrote that, in spite of the enormous load of work on his shoulders, Lenin, during the brief space of life left to him, concerned himself untiringly with all the questions connected with the journal and was able, by suggestions and proposals, to fill the editorial board with his spirit, so that fundamentally the periodical was his creation.

AN examination of Deborin's philosophical attitude, as outlined above, shows that it contains ideas which, in the twenties, must have been extremely welcome to the Bolshevik Party. In the realm of politics his theory of the dialectical leaps in development has a close affinity to the ideas of the Party, which found in it the philosophical confirmation of its hopes for international revolution. The mechanistic theory of evolution could hardly have met with approval during the twenties.

Moreover, one only had to pursue Deborin's theory of the inevitable connection between philosophy, society and science through to its logical conclusion, with the Party's tasks in mind, to find in it a cleverly disguised device for using philosophy to control society and science unobtrusively and effectively. The theoretical leadership of society and science which he demanded for the philosophers encouraged the idea of the Party's practical leadership in those fields. Not only did he draw up the ideal blueprint of control; but he also took the first practical steps in that direction. In opposing all spontaneous impulses, for which he demanded prior philosophical sanction, he initiated their practical control. Unintentionally he thus prepared the method of social and political control from above which the Party was later to make clever use of.

Moreover, the primacy of the dialectical method, which he finally succeeded in establishing against the opposition of the natural

scientists, offered the opportunity, which could not be ignored, of suppressing all undesirable developments in the individual sciences. Here too he paved the way for the Party's later social and political practices.

It is not surprising therefore that the Deborinists were given effective support in their fight against the Mechanists. Later on this philosophical struggle provided an opportunity to link the Mechanists with the right-wing deviators of those years (Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky) and thus to seal the philosophical verdict by a political one.

When the second All-Union Conference of Marxist-Leninist research institutes opened in the Communist Academy in Moscow on 8 April 1929, the Mechanists found themselves at a disadvantage. As the majority of the 229 delegates belonged in any case to the Deborinist faction, the support of the Party was not needed to damn mechanistic materialism as an 'obvious deviation from the position of Marxist-Leninist philosophy'.

In his report to the conference Deborin once again summarised the points at issue. The crux of the controversy he continued to see in the Mechanists' refusal to recognise the use of the dialectic as compulsory in the natural sciences. With undiminished violence he accused Timiriazev and his followers of still not understanding that the crisis in modern natural science was caused by a crisis in fundamental methodological principles: 'We maintained', he said to the conference, 'that the law of the unity of opposites must be made the basis of theoretical physics. Our opponents thereupon accused us of idealism, scholasticism, and every other deadly sin. Comrade Timiriazev has called me the "liquidator of the natural sciences". Who, if not Comrade Timiriazev, should guard the natural sciences against our plots?'

As before he attacked the Mechanist charge that he had forced the dialectical method on the natural sciences and had therefore dictated laws to nature instead of inducing them from it. 'Comrade Timiriazev's ideas about Marxism are as confused as his ideas about Hegel's dialectic', he said to the Mechanists, 'Like all Mechanists, he completely fails to understand the reciprocal connection between theory and practice. He believes in empiricism, proceeding at a snail's pace, and "Khvostism",* and denies the role of the dialectic as a tool of research....'

With the condemnation of the Mechanists, who included, in addition to Timiriazev and Akselrod, A. Varyash, V. L. Sarabyanov, Perov, Geylikman, Z. A. Tseitlin and others, Deborin reached the peak of his influence on Soviet philosophy. In his journal he noted with satisfaction that communist society had pronounced the final verdict. This verdict, passed by the most distinguished scientists in the country, must satisfy everybody.

His philosophical victory and his personal triumph over the Mechanists were effectively complemented by an increase in institutional power. His position as editor-in-chief of *Under the Banner of Marxism*, in those years the only philosophical journal, was confirmed by the conference. In addition he directed the Institute of Philosophy of the Communist Academy, was a member of the Presidium of that Academy, deputy director of the Marx-Engels Institute, and, after 1929, also an ordinary member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Furthermore, he was responsible for the philosophical section of the first Soviet Encyclopedia, which had started appearing in 1926 under the overall editorship of his friend O. Y. Shmidt; this enabled him to exercise a direct influence on the shape of the Encyclopedia, which played an extremely important part in forming political opinion in the Soviet Union. Until 1930 all the philosophical articles appearing in the Encyclopedia bear the stamp of his editorship. The Deborinists also controlled the philosophical department of the State Publishing House, which enabled them to examine all important theoretical publications. Another advantageous result of the second All-Union conference was the reform of Timiriazev's Scientific Research Institute in Moscow, until then under the control of the Mechanists, the directorship of which was given to the Deborinist I. I. Agol.

THE greater philosophical self-confidence of the Deborinists, which had been the result of the second All-Union Conference, and the claim to leadership, which they made soon afterwards, soon spoiled their relations with the

* Lenin's term to denote lagging in the 'tail' of events.

Party. In 1929, however, the Party was still busy with other tasks. In the year of ' the great turn on all fronts of socialist construction ' it was first of all necessary to break the opposition inside the Party to the policy of forced industrialisation and collectivisation. N. I. Bukharin, a member of the Politbureau, Rykov, then Soviet Prime Minister, and Tomsky, at the head of the trade unions, had come out against Stalin's policy of intensifying the class struggle. What could be more obvious in such a situation than to establish a connection between the ' rightist deviation ' in politics and the ' rightest deviation ' in philosophy? The spectacle of five years of controversy must have drawn the attention of even the least interested observer to the differences of opinion on the ' philosophical front '. After all, the Mechanists had been condemned as an evolutionary and positivist movement, which in political terminology meant ' rightest deviation '. The arguments used in the philosophical controversy offered themselves as a political weapon in the fight against all opposition to Stalin's general line of 1929.

It was no coincidence that the elimination of the Mechanists took place at the same time as the elimination of the Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky group. Bukharin was accused of Mechanism in philosophy and in April 1929 lost his position as president of the Communist International. In November 1929 he was expelled from the Politbureau.

This being the state of affairs, it was clear that the alliance between the party ideologists and the Deborinists could only be of short duration. In 1930 the ' philosophical front ' presented a completely different picture.

The controversy between the Deborinists and the Mechanists concerned the philosophical foundations of Marxism, in which a subtler way of presenting arguments could only have a disturbing and hampering effect. So long as the foundations of Soviet philosophy were not clearly defined, a third ideological position could hardly be established without impeding or even preventing the process of clarification which was just beginning.

After Deborin's success at the conference things changed. There was now only one philosophical line, of which the Party could expect that, after winning a brilliant philosophical victory, it would show the same intellectual brilliance in the execution of real tasks. But the hopes which the Party had put in Deborin remained unfulfilled. In the new situation it became clear that Deborin's dialectical philosophy had rather aristocratic characteristics and that its representatives were not prepared to give immediate sanction to the Party's practical measures. They continued to look upon Soviet philosophy, which they represented and wanted to purge of all non-Marxist elements and preserve in complete purity, as the highest and ultimate criterion of truth of social and political development. They continued to regard all concrete phenomena of Soviet society—in so far as they paid any attention to them at all—only from the point of view of Marxist theory and the Hegelian dialectic.

After the condemnation of the Mechanists the truce in Soviet philosophy lasted just a year, or more accurately until the joint session of the Institute of Philosophy of the Communist Academy and the Moscow Organisation of the Society of Militant Materialists and Dialecticians held from 20 to 24 April 1930. Deborin gave the main speech and presided over the discussion which followed.

At the beginning of the conference Deborin still had good reason to believe that his philosophical ideas, which he had successfully defended against the Mechanists, would continue to have the approval of the Party; but by the end of the conference this had become more than doubtful. During the discussion it emerged that an anti-Deborin regrouping was taking place among Soviet philosophers. Deborin's report on ' Results and tasks on the philosophical front ' was attacked and criticised with surprising violence by a small group.

Characteristically, the new group did not criticise any concrete point of the analysis given in the report, but made a general attack on the Deborinists' claim to be the leaders of philosophy. This was a completely new attitude; it was not directed against this or that point of dialectical philosophy, it did not seize on any theoretical problem, but, while accepting Deborin's theoretical arguments, nevertheless aimed at the removal of the Deborinists. Immediately after the discussion Deborin commented that it was less a question of theoretical

opposition to his philosophy than of the appearance of a new group, which defied exact definition, which apparently wanted to obtain control of the philosophical field, a group which, as he put it, was 'thirsting for power'.

In his final speech to the conference Deborin dealt with the arguments of his new opponents and announced that he would resist any attempt to discredit the philosophical leadership and to wrest it from his followers. 'Some comrades have said: your general line is correct, we don't want to break up the philosophical leadership; but on the other hand they have pursued a line which was aimed precisely at suppressing and discrediting the philosophical leadership. We shall fight against this. Why shall we fight? Naturally not because we cling to the leadership in philosophy, but because what the splinter group has said shows evidence of unhealthy symptoms.' Thus began the struggle between the Deborinists and the party ideologists for the control of Soviet philosophy.

IN April 1930 the new group was not yet able to get its way against the Deborinists. Although Deborin had met a new and incomparably more dangerous opponent, the resolution 'concerning the results and new tasks on the philosophical front', which he introduced, was adopted by an overwhelming majority of the conference (there was only one vote against it).

The decisive turning point occurred some months later, the occasion being a semi-official article, published in *Pravda* on 7 June 1930, written by three, then still unknown, party ideologists: Mark Borisovich Mitin (born 1901), Pavel Fedorovich Yudin (born 1899), and Vasili Nikiforovich Raltsevich (?). They came from the Institute of Red Professors and therefore had an influential institution behind them. Mitin and Yudin were the heads of the Institute party organisation. They thus represented a new type in the philosophical controversy, which until then had been waged by scholars.

The party ideologists justified their criticism of Soviet philosophy by reference to the approach of the Sixteenth Party Congress and the great practical tasks which it would present to the theoreticians. 'Reality is confronting theory with tremendous problems', they wrote. 'It is necessary to start at once with the preparation and theoretical generalisation of these problems on the basis of Marxist-Leninist methodology. Instead we notice that theory is lagging considerably behind.' This accusation was obviously directed at Deborin and his school.

They heaped reproach after reproach on official Soviet philosophy, accusing it of a lack of party-mindedness and of political neutrality, and imputing to it extreme formalism and the malicious separation of philosophy from the practical problems of the country. Their attack culminated in the demand that new tasks be formulated for philosophy, envisaging a fight on two fronts.

The philosophical equivalent of 'rightist deviation' in politics had been found in mechanistic materialism. Now—under the banner of a fight on two philosophical fronts—the party ideologists tried to establish the philosophical equivalent of 'leftist deviation', that is, of Trotskyism. Only if it could be proved that the leftist deviation represented a whole system which had penetrated into the official philosophy and of which there must therefore necessarily be a social equivalent, could the Party claim that its ruthless procedure against the Trotskyists was fully justified.

What was more obvious for this purpose, after the equation of Mechanism with 'rightist deviation' had proved so successful, than to say that Deborinism was the philosophical basis of Trotskyism? If Deborinism could be identified with Trotskyism, Deborin and his 'dialectical school' would be unmasked as forming an anti-state and anti-party movement and the philosophical foundations of Trotskyism would be laid bare.

Though cautiously phrased, the article did indeed accuse Deborin of Trotskyism. 'Fully aware of the great importance which the fight against Mechanism has played in strengthening Marxist-Leninist theory, we cannot, as some comrades are trying to do, pass over the shortcomings and mistakes which have occurred in communist philosophy in the past period of development. One of the major inadequacies has proved to be that in its development Marxist-Leninist philosophy has failed to unmask the theoretical foundations of Trotskyism.'

As the development of 'Marxist-Leninist philosophy' had until then been in Deborin's hands, the implication was obvious.

Retrospectively, it can be seen that after the publication of the semi-official article of 7 June 1930 the Deborinists were pushed on the defensive. Subjectively, however, they did not feel themselves to be on the defensive at all. On the contrary, they published a strong criticism of the new ideas. The May number of their periodical *Under the Banner of Marxism* contained a counter-declaration, signed by the most prominent representatives of dialectical philosophy. Their answer to the criticism in *Pravda* was produced with surprising self-confidence and was still written completely in the tone of 'philosophical leaders'.

In the introduction they said: '*Pravda* of 7 June of this year contained an article by Comrades M. Mitin, V. Raltsevich and P. Yudin, entitled "Concerning the new tasks of Marxist-Leninist philosophy". But this article presents a correct appreciation neither of the present situation in the realm of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, nor of the tasks which confront us. As the article touches upon extremely important topical questions we believe it necessary to examine these in greater detail.' The Deborinists pointed out that everything which was correct in the article of the three party ideologists was simply a restatement of their own philosophical views. 'But', they continued, 'where the authors of the article express their own views they depart from the correct Marxist-Leninist position.'

While the party ideologists had defined Mechanism and Trotskyism as the two fronts on which Soviet philosophy must fight, the Deborinists now added 'formalism and eclecticism' as a new front, putting the article of the party ideologists into this category.

It is surprising that in their defence the Deborinists said nothing about the Trotskyism of which they had been obliquely accused. This is the more surprising as they examined all the other accusations in detail and pulled them to pieces with the skill they had already demonstrated many times before.

Either they were so involved in their traditional ways of putting problems that, conscious of their services in the fight against Mechanism, they dismissed as unimportant the accusation of not having done their duty of political supervision in one instance, or they were aware of an unfortunate omission in this question which they tried to pass over in silence. Another explanation might be that there was really an unadmitted elective affinity between Deborin's philosophy and Trotsky's political theories. The far-ranging learning, the delight in rhetorical glitter and stylistic form, the internationalist orientation and receptivity, even if critical, for the ideas for Western Europe, which characterised both Deborinists and Trotskyists, make it possible to compare them on the basis of an intellectual, psychological elective affinity. But beyond this there is no proof of the existence of any close political or philosophical connection, as claimed by the Party.

Whatever the truth, the fact that the Party very soon gave official support to the article of 7 June decided the outcome of the controversy. Moreover, making the attitude of the article its own provided the Party with a specific point of of view on all philosophical questions. It could now fall back on a philosophy whose creed was the unconditional support of the Party's practical measures with philosophical arguments.

However strongly the Deborinists defended themselves, and however good and convincing their arguments, they lost influence steadily. In the September 1930 issue of their journal they were made to publish a resolution directed against themselves. It appeared on the last page without comment, and marks the end of the phase during which the journal was directed in the spirit of Deborin's dialectical philosophy. The September number was the last to be produced by the old editors. The next number appeared, but only after Deborin's dismissal in January 1931, under the new direction of V. V. Adoratski, M. B. Mitin, and P. F. Yudin.

THE elimination of Deborin's dialectical philosophy from Soviet intellectual life was accomplished in two resolutions which followed each other in quick succession: first, the resolution of the party cell of the Institute of Red Professors, of 29 December 1930, taken as a result of Stalin's personal initiative, which subjected Deborin's views to devastating criticism;

and second, the decision of the Central Committee of the CPSU of 25 January 1931, which condemned the philosophical line of *Under the Banner of Marxism* and ordered a change of editorial board.

At the height of the conflict between Deborin and the three party ideologists, Stalin intervened in the controversy. On 9 December 1930 he appeared in the office of the party cell of the Institute of Red Professors and, during the meeting, coined the expression 'menshevising idealism' to describe Deborin's views.

Stalin's phrase about 'menshevising idealism' was in fact meaningless. But as it linked Deborin's views with two movements which Soviet terminology branded as counter-revolutionary and reactionary, it could be used against an opponent who could not be accused of any concrete misdemeanours. In this capacity the concept 'menshevising idealism' has continued to exist in Soviet terminology up to the present day.

It only remains to be said that the resolution of 25 January 1931 liquidated one of the most interesting phenomena in Soviet philosophy. Pilloried by the Party, Deborin and his school were submerged by a flood of suspicions and insults. Under pressure from the Party, and debarred from all active occupations, the Deborinists either took to self-criticism and turned into fierce critics of their former convictions—like I. K. Luppol (who vanished in the thirties) or V. F. Asmus (who is still writing today)—or else they remained firm in spite of the drive against them; in that case they had to endure trial for 'counter-revolutionary activities'—like B. N. Gessen and Y. E. Sten. Or else they retired completely from public life—voluntarily or under pressure—and became silent for ever.

Deborin had a twofold fate. It was noticeable that during the last months of the controversy he kept back and after the May declaration published nothing in his own defence. It is said that on 1 January 1931 he made a complete confession of his guilt before the Society of Militant Materialists and Dialecticians. It may be that when his followers were censured this early self-criticism saved him from anything worse than losing control of *Under the Banner of Marxism*. He was allowed to keep all his other public positions. Some years later he was even elected to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences and remained there until the end of the second world war.

As he admitted later (1933) in a long, self-critical speech at the Institute of Philosophy, Deborin had not finally abandoned his philosophical convictions in 1931. 'Our fundamental mistake', he said, 'lay in separating theory and practice. I must admit that for a long time I did not understand that accusation, because, after all, I was constantly speaking of practice as the criterion of truth. I was speaking about it and writing about it. Only later did I understand that this was not all that was at stake. The essence of the matter was that we failed to establish a connection between our theoretical and methodological investigations and the concrete tasks of socialist construction, that we separated theory from life. This led to a state where some of the menshevising idealists developed to a certain degree into "inner emigrants" and later into political opportunists.'

Turning to his former followers, he demanded from them 'complete and unconditional surrender'. This, he thought, was the only possible decision for an honest communist.

Even though he bought his personal security and part of his public position with his 'unconditional surrender', the few of his articles which appeared after 1933 are devoid of any independent thought. They do not differ in any way from dozens of similarly nondescript productions. After disowning his philosophy he had really nothing else to say. He appears uncertain and indulges in false radicalism. His articles 'Karl Marx and the Present' (1933), and 'Lenin and the Present' (1934), are pedestrian treatises in party jargon. After 1934 he turned almost completely away from philosophical subjects—for example in the articles 'N. A. Dobroliubov' (1936), 'I. P. Pavlov and Materialism' (1936), and 'Bourgeois or socialist humanism' (1937)—or he repeated the Party's political slogans—for example in the articles 'The warmongers' campaign against national sovereignty' (1951), and 'The Agency of American Imperialism' (1953). Whenever during the last years he ventured into the realm of philosophy he wrote

about such out of the way subjects as 'Materialism and the dialectic in ancient Indian philosophy' (1956). His latest article 'Leibnitz as a Social Thinker' apeared in *Voprosy Filosofii* (No. 3, 1961).

The dialectical philosophy which Deborin and his disciples developed during the twenties has remained unique in the Soviet Union on account of its philosophical originality and intellectual range. Since then no worthwhile attempt has been made to work out an *independent Soviet philosophy*, unaffected by the political interests of the Communist Party, or to revive the traditions of the early days. After 1931 dialectical materialism became canonised and was turned into rigid dogma. Since then all work on philosophical questions has remained within the narrow limits of a general line which even lays down the choice of words.

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HISTORY UNDER ULBRICHT

Francis Carsten

AT the International Historical Congress in Stockholm last August the East German historians were conspicuous for the frequency and the length of their interventions in the discussions, and for their many passionate and vituperative attacks on 'bourgeois' historians and their ideas; behaviour which distinguished them from the historians of some other communist countries. The East German historians seemed to have a ready answer to every problem; everything was either 'feudal' and 'reactionary', or 'progressive' and 'democratic'. In a simplified world of black and white there was no cause for any doubt. These views were propounded with an air of omniscience which at times bordered on the simple-minded, especially when it was not backed by any factual knowledge. What is the state of East German historical studies today? To what extent do its products bear out the far-reaching claims made at the Stockholm Congress? This question may be answered by an examination of the contents of recent East German historical journals. These are by no means uninteresting or unimportant; they provide an object lesson in the application of 'Marxist' principles to historical subjects, coming from a country which has always been proud of the high standard of its historical scholarship.

The historical journals of 'bourgeois' countries usually contain a high proportion of factual articles, often appealing to the specialist only, and sometimes of a purely antiquarian interest. What comes closest to this category in the East German periodicals are articles on the activities of Friedrich Engels, for example in Switzerland at the end of 1848 and the beginning of 1849, or—more important—in Germany in the spring and summer of 1848.[1] To the same group belongs an article on the origins and aims of the *Roter Soldatenbund* of the autumn of 1918 written by one of its former leaders.[2] These articles are informative and have no particular axe to grind; they are useful to anyone interested in those particular subjects. Yet the most important one—that on Engels in the spring and summer of 1848—is too superficial in its argumentation. Having stated, on Engels' own authority, that Marx and Engels, after the outbreak of the March revolution in Germany, succeeded in repatriating three to four hundred German workers from France to Germany, while many thousands more returned spontaneously on their own, the writer continues as if this return too had been inspired or organised by Marx and Engels to further the revolutionary movement in Germany.[3] And when speaking of the seventeen demands formulated by Marx and Engels in March 1848 as a programme of the German Left, the author alleges that these demands have hitherto been little noticed and are not even mentioned in the standard biography of Engels by Gustav Mayer. In fact, however, Gustav Mayer not only mentions them, but discusses them at much greater length than the article under review,[4] whose author also seems to be unable to make up his mind whether the German working class of 1848 was the left wing of the democratic movement or whether, under the guidance of Marx and Engels, it followed its own entirely independent political line.[5] While Gustav Mayer, who was after all

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[1] Rolf Dlubek, 'Zur politischen Tätigkeit von Friedrich Engels in der Schweiz Ende 1848—Anfang 1849', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, ii, 4, 1960; Karl Obermann, 'Ueber die Bedeutung der Tätigkeit von Friedrich Engels im Frühjahr und Sommer 1848' *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, ix, 1, 1961.

[2] Albert Schreiner, 'Der Rote Soldatenbund', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, ii, 4, 1960.

[3] Karl Obermann, loc. cit., p. 35.

[4] Ibid., p. 37; Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, vol. I (Berlin, 1920), pp. 313–15, 319.

[5] Karl Obermann, loc. cit., pp. 36, 45.

only a 'bourgeois' historian, need perhaps not be taken too seriously by a 'Marxist', one could expect at least a firm view on such a vital issue; for in 1848 the German working class was far too weak to adopt an entirely independent political line; Marx and Engels stood on the extreme left of the democratic forces, critical of their more fantastic schemes and activities, but participating in them nevertheless (especially Engels with his strong military inclinations).

An interesting article on a medieval subject —the subjugation of Berlin in 1346 and the attitude of the Brandenburg towns during the succession struggles between the Wittelsbachs and the Luxemburgers—falls more or less into the same group. It is informative and has something new to say, but the writer takes his own interpretation of the rather scanty evidence too much for granted. He asserts that there were no obvious advantages for the towns under the Ascanians as compared with the Wittelsbach period.[6] Yet, while the Ascanians had ruled Brandenburg with a firm hand and had kept down internal unrest, the Wittelsbachs exploited the country for their own benefit and that of the Bavarian noblemen who came with them to the north, the Wittelsbach government was weak and led to internal disorders, and whole districts were sold to foreign rulers: all these facts would have given the towns ample reason to side with the 'false' Margrave Woldemar when he appeared in Brandenburg, while many of the nobility supported the Wittelsbachs.[7] Contrary to the author's assertion, these antagonistic interests of towns and nobility in a feudal society seem to provide a satisfactory interpretation of the complicated struggles in Brandenburg during the fourteenth century. In general it seems that medieval history, side by side with that of the founding fathers of Marxism, serves as a fairly safe refuge for those historians who value their craft and dislike getting involved in the current political controversies.

ALMOST any other subject, indeed, is charged with political bias and preconceived ideas to which the historical facts have to be subordinated. This applies clearly to subjects such as the Prussian Junkers or the Baltic barons. Thus we are told by Professor Gerhard Schilfert that in Prussia 'militarism was . . . according to its social content the expression of the terroristic class rule of the Junkers',[8] and that 'the Estates were in the main a component of the feudal system and above all defended reactionary interests'.[9] But such sweeping generalisations entirely neglect the different social composition of the Estates in the many German principalities and the widely differing interests of nobility, towns, and peasantry. Another historian goes so far as to state 'that the Baltic barons and pastors could feast and revel on their estates and could acquire an education which they only used to enslave the people further'.[10] He thus reveals his total ignorance of the social position of the clergy in the Baltic territories, where the landed wealth of the Church had been secularised in the sixteenth century, and where the individual clergyman certainly did not possess a large estate.

That some historians are capable of producing work on a higher level is shown by the theses on 'the early bourgeois revolution in Germany (1476–1535)' by Professor Max Steinmetz. If he performs the obligatory bow before 'the truly national policy of the German working class',[11] he also successfully

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[6] Eckhard Müller-Mertens, 'Die Unterwerfung Berlins 1346 und die Haltung der märkischen Städte im wittelsbachisch-luxemburgischen Thronstreit', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 1, 1960.

[7] For the evidence, see F. L. Carsten, *The Origins of Prussia* (Oxford, 1954), pp. 93–94.

[8] 'Der Militarismus war . . . seinem sozialen Inhalt nach . . . der Ausdruck der terroristischen Klassenherrschaft der Junker': quoted with approval in the *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 1, 1960, p. 194, from Gerhard Schilfert, *Deutschland von 1648 bis 1789* (Berlin, 1959), p. 50.

[9] *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, ix, 1, 1961, p. 164, reporting on the International Historical Congress in Stockholm.

[10] 'dass die baltischen Barone und Pastoren auf ihren Gütern schwelgten und sich eine Bildung aneignen konnten, die sie nur benutzten, um das Volk weiterhin knechten zu können . . .': Alfred Anderle and Siegmar Quilitzsch, 'Georg von Rauch—ein Ideologe des faschistischen "Dranges nach Osten" und Verfechter der antisowjetischen NATO-Politik', in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 7, 1960, p. 1533.

[11] Max Steinmetz, 'Die frühbürgerliche Revolution in Deutschland (1476–1535)', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 1, 1960, p. 124.

connects the religious and the social movements of the Reformation period, and his theses seem well worth discussing in detail. He rightly stresses the deep divisions within the Protestant camp, but assumes incorrectly that 'the German princes distrusted the bourgeois-radical and republican leanings of the Swiss and above all the revolutionary anti-Habsburg policy of Zwingli and Gaismaier'.[12] This was not true of Landgrave Philip of Hesse, who played the leading part in the Protestant camp, but it did apply to the Electors of Saxony. It is equally incorrect that the German princes of the sixteenth century 'had largely prevailed in the struggle against the central authority and against their own Estates, i.e. the nobility, the towns and the clergy'.[13] This was not even the case by the end of the sixteenth century: the struggle was only to be decided in the course of the seventeenth, usually in favour of the princes. If opinions differ, however, there is a good deal of common ground here and material for further discussion; these theses provide a healthy counterweight to the usual neglect of social factors in the history of the Reformation.

IF the early modern period of European history is treated with the aid of blinkers or rose-coloured spectacles, their colour seems to become black when we approach the twentieth century, and in particular the history of communism and of Russia. Since August Bebel is now one of the recognised saints of Eastern Germany and is classified as a great revolutionary leader, strong exception is taken to the views of a West German historian who emphasised the close proximity and collaboration between Bebel and the 'renegade' Kautsky in the years before 1914.[14] The very limited influence which Lenin from his exile in Switzerland could exercise on the developments in Russia during the first world war is glossed over by the assertion that 'under these slogans (i.e. those of Lenin and his collaborators) there developed in Tsarist Russia the strongest revolutionary mass movement against the Imperialist war'; while even Germany has to take second place: 'in Germany the size of the mass movement against the Imperialist war surpassed those in all other countries except only Russia'.[15] We are further told that 'the adherence of the KPD [German Communist Party] to the unity of the German working class movement . . . was from the foundation of the party one of its basic principles'.[16] This is indeed strange history in view of the fact that at its foundation in December 1918 the party, against the advice of Rosa Luxemburg, decided to split off, not from the right-wing Social Democrats, but from the left-wing Independent Socialists: from that time onwards until its ignominious dissolution in 1933 it remained the policy of the KPD to perpetuate that split. There is an article of twenty-two pages on 'the importance of the second world congress of the Communist International for the unification of the revolutionary left wing of the Independent Socialists with the KPD', in which the names of the protagonists, Paul Levi, Karl Radek, G. Zinoviev, and A. Lozovsky, are never mentioned; nor is the fact that—to prevent the right-wing Independent leaders from joining the Comintern—the Russian leaders increased the original 18 conditions of admittance to 21, so that those disagreeing with the conditions could be expelled, as could also a number of named 'notorious Reformists'—points which were expressly stated during the proceedings of the second world congress.[17] On account of

[12] Ibid., p. 115.

[13] 'Das Fürstentum . . . hatte sich im Kampf gegen die Zentralgewalt und gegen die eigenen Landstände, d.h. gegen den Adel, die Städte und die Kirche, weitgehend durchgesetzt': ibid., p. 118.

[14] Dieter Fricke, 'In der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik wird das Vermächtnis von August Bebel erfüllt', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 2, 1960, p. 279.

[15] Rudolf Lindau, 'Spartakusbriefe', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, ii, 3, 1960, p. 610.

[16] 'Das Bekenntnis der KPD zur Einheit der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung . . . gehört seit der Gründung der Partei zu ihren Grundprinzipien': Siegfried Thomas, 'Der Wiederbeginn des politischen Lebens in Berlin und die Aktionseinheit der Arbeiterparteien', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 6, 1960, p. 1331.

[17] Horst Naumann, 'Die Bedeutung des II. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale für die Vereinigung des revolutionären Flügels der USPD mit der KPD', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, ii, 3, 1960, p.

the vehemence of the Russians' attacks on the 'yellow' trade union leaders it was not the majority of the Independent Socialists (as asserted by the writer), but a minority who finally joined the German Communist Party[18]: a factor of decisive importance in its later history.

Stranger still is the assertion that, during the period of the Weimar Republic, 'the KPD was the only political party that always held high the banner of democracy'[19]: there must be hundreds of thousands of people in Eastern Germany today who well remember that it was the constant attacks of the German communists on the 'system' of the Weimar Republic which were one of the causes of its downfall; its banner was certainly trampled underfoot by both Nazis and communists. Matters become more serious when the author of a recent East German book on the ill-fated Hamburg rising of 1923, Heinz Habedank, is accused by its reviewer of the cardinal sins that he has 'ignored the political-ideological content, the scientific, class-based, marxist method and assessment of Walter Ulbricht', that he has 'distorted the development of the KPD and underrated the importance of Ernst Thälmann and other proven leaders of the working class movement', and this at a time 'when the class enemy with great efforts was campaigning against the leadership of the SED' and 'revisionist ideas had penetrated into historical science'.[20] The reviewer adds significantly that he finds it incomprehensible how such a book, already in the second edition, could appear in the party publishing house (Dietz Verlag) which owed it to its authors and readers not to publish anything opening the doors wide to revisionist views.[21] Yet even he finds it difficult to square the facts of the case with his endeavours to classify the Hamburg rising as a genuine proletarian revolution, and not a *putsch*. As is quite correctly stated in Habedank's book, the Central Committee of the German Communist Party left the final decision whether a general strike should be called and an armed rising be attempted to a conference of shop stewards convened at Chemnitz—which eventually decided against such a policy. But on 21 October 1923 a courier was sent to Hamburg ordering the local organisation to initiate an uprising, while the countermanding decision of the Central Committee reached Hamburg only after the rising had been set in train. It has never been established with certainty why the courier was sent before the final decision was taken: it may well have been because some of the communist leaders disagreed with the hesitating policy of the Central Committee.[22] In these circumstances, however, the Hamburg rising could only be a *putsch* by a tiny, isolated minority (even of the communists), and not all 'anti-revisionist' ardour can possibly transform it into a genuine revolution.

YET even on the role and policy of the KPD an article can be very revealing and make a contribution to our knowledge, as is

466 ff.; *Der zweite Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale—Protokoll der Verhandlungen vom 19. Juli in Petrograd und vom 23. Juli bis 7. August in Moskau*, Hamburg, 1921, pp. 657–58.

18 Horst Naumann, loc. cit., pp. 484–85; *The Communist International, 1919–1943*, Documents ed. by Jane Degras, vol. I (London, 1956), p. 196.

19 Klaus Mammach, 'Die Militärpolitik der SPD-Führung in der Weimarer Republik in der Sicht der Bundeswehr', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, ii, 4, 1960, p. 787.

20 Horst Wild, review of Heinz Habedank, *Zur Geschichte des Hamburger Aufstandes 1923* (Berlin, 1958), in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 1, 1960, p. 213. Another recent East German book, Ursula Puls, *Die Bästlein-Jacob-Abshagen-Gruppe* (Berlin, 1959), is criticised on similar grounds by Lena Roggenbuck, ibid., viii, 6, 1960, p. 1467.

21 Horst Wild, loc. cit., p. 219.

22 Ibid., pp. 217–19, especially the quotation from Wilhelm Pieck on p. 218. According to the version of Ossip K. Flechtheim, *Die Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands in der Weimarer Republik* (Offenbach, 1948), p. 96, it was Ernst Thälmann who came out of the conference room and on his own initiative told the couriers to set out: all but the one sent to Hamburg (Remmele) were intercepted at Chemnitz station, but he had already departed. If that was so, it would explain the violence of the attack on Habedank, for the 'revolutionary honour' of Thälmann would be at stake. This version is contradicted by E. H. Carr, *The Interregnum 1923–1924* (London, 1954), p. 222, who says that 'Thälmann and Remmele left Chemnitz before the conference ended under the impression that its success was assured, and, arriving in Hamburg on the evening of October 22, gave the word for the rising to begin'. In that case, too, Thälmann's reputation would be closely involved.

done by a paper on 'the restarting of political life in Berlin and the unity of action of the working-class parties (May to July 1945)'. Its author emphasises the leading part played by the *Gruppe Ulbricht* newly returned from Moscow, a subject on which we have heard much from Wolfgang Leonhard.[23] We also hear how much opposition there was among the rank and file to the new party line which Ulbricht had brought with him, especially to 'the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the establishment of an anti-fascist democratic order, and cooperation with bourgeois forces'. Many communists expected the immediate establishment of socialism and refused, in a genuine revival of the anti-democratic communist tradition of the years before 1933, to occupy posts in the local administration which was being re-established. They did not want to become *bonzes*, well remembering the party's fulminations against the socialist *bonzes* of the past.[24] A gloss to the official policy that only one-third of the members of a borough council should be party members is provided by the statement that the Berlin city council was composed of six communists, four Social Democrats, three Christian Democrats, and four 'non-party' councillors[25]: as most of the latter would support the communists, these were assured a majority from the outset.

Equally significant are the admissions that in Berlin there had existed 'a number of important Social Democratic resistance groups' and that the initiative in the work of rebuilding the shattered city and its administration emanated 'in most cases (*in den meisten Fällen*) from working-class functionaries of both party leanings', having claimed two pages earlier that 'the first independent activities to overcome the chaos were usually (*meistens*) initiated by the communists'.[26] The writer also makes it clear that from the beginning it was the aim of Ulbricht and his associates to bring about 'ideological unity on the basis of revolutionary Marxism', with the Communist Party as 'the leading element in this unity of action'.[27] This policy was much facilitated by the fact that the KPD could, 'before the readmission of political parties in Berlin, create the nucleus of a future organisation and prepare a section of the middle and lower functionaries ideologically for the legal activities'.[28] Thus the KPD was able to use its close links with the Soviet administration to establish itself in the leading positions not only in Berlin, but throughout the Soviet zone of Germany.

Real falsification of the facts of history, however, occurs when it comes to Russia and to Soviet policy. Perhaps we need not be too surprised to read once again in 1960 that the second world war 'was started as an Imperialist war by the bourgeois governments', but 'became, after the entry of the Soviet Union, a just war against the Fascist block of states'.[29] In the same article several writers are accused of falsification and of attempting to rehabilitate German militarism because they say that the methods used by the German occupiers in Russia resulted in a sharp increase of local resistance and of Partisan activities, while a more intelligent policy would have diminished this opposition. Even the writer of the article, however, does not seem to know what is wrong with such statements, for he himself argues that 'the Imperialist policy of robbery and suppression increased the hatred against the Fascist occupiers and furthered the partisan movement'—which seems to be saying the same thing in different words. The accusations arise because he has to prove a case: namely, that 'the paladins of German Imperialism are sanctioning and justifying the lost war . . . in connection with the rearmament of German Imperialism and the resurrection of its

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[23] Siegfried Thomas, 'Der Wiederbeginn des politischen Lebens in Berlin und die Aktionseinheit der Arbeiterparteien (Mai-Jul 1945)', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 6, 1960, pp. 1316, 1322–23; Wolfgang Leonhard, *Child of the Revolution* (London, 1957), Chap. VII.

[24] Siegfried Thomas, loc cit., pp. 1320, 1323–25.

[25] Ibid., p. 1321, n. 40.

[26] Ibid., pp. 1316, 1318, 1326.

[27] Ibid., pp. 1337, 1340.

[28] Ibid., p. 1323.

[29] Heinz Kühnreich, 'Die Darstellung der Partisanenbewegung in der westdeutschen Historiographie', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 1, 1960, p. 37.

military machine under the old " tried " leadership '.[30]

The welcome which the population in many parts extended to the German troops when they advanced into Russia, is classified as a lie not only in this article, but also in the review of a new West German historical handbook.[31] Such a disagreeable fact is no longer a fact, but must be denied at all cost. On the subject of the treatment of the German prisoners of war in Russia, however, we are told that 'there developed among the prisoners of war —in the recognition of the political and moral collective duty of the German people—a competitive movement to obtain the highest results on the restitution front': a formula whose veracity will willingly be attested by countless former prisoners of war who, according to the same author, were successfully re-educated during their prolonged stay in Russia.[32] With statements such as these we have reached the realm of pure fantasy—or of pure cant, if the writers know what they are writing about.

EQUALLY fantastic is the argument used in a paper on the resistance of the German working class to Nazism and the election of Nazi works councils in 1935. What its author intends to prove is that at that time the masses of the German workers were still hostile to the Nazis—to corroborate a statement of Wilhelm Pieck quoted by him.[33] The question to what extent the workers stood under Nazi influence would be easy to answer if we possessed the true results of the elections to the works councils, but all we have are the official results published by the Nazis, which show that of 7,741,802 people entitled to vote, 5,296,108 voted 'yes', the remainder either abstaining or voting 'no'; but the Nazis published the 'yes' votes as a percentage of the valid votes cast, thus taking no account of the abstentions and the invalid votes, which in certain places were very numerous (in some factories fewer than 50 per cent of the workers cast their votes).[34] There is thus some justification for adding the abstentions and the invalid votes to the 'no' votes. This the author does, using the figures for a chemical plant at Merseburg with over 15,000 workers, where the 'yes' votes amounted to 74·3 and the 'no' and invalid votes and abstentions to 25·7 per cent. What he has failed to notice is that this figure is considerably *lower* than that officially admitted by the Nazis for the whole of Germany, which amounts to 68·4 per cent voting 'yes', and 31·6 per cent voting 'no' or abstaining (not 25·6 per cent as the author erroneously says).[35] In other words, if the figures published by him for the Merseburg works are at all indicative of the voting in general, they seem to show that the Nazis did *not* falsify the results (as he alleges).[36] Above all, however, his principal thesis falls to the ground. If more than 74 per cent of the workers voted 'yes' (as the author thinks), or even only over 68 per cent (which seems to be the correct figure), this would certainly disprove the thesis that in 1935 the masses of the German workers were still opposed to Nazism—even if Wilhelm Pieck said so at the time. Unwittingly, the author proves the opposite of what he intended to prove: such are the pitfalls of arithmetic. Yet in his opinion the election results were 'a great success for the anti-fascist forces under the leadership of the KPD'[37]: a modesty rarely evident in communist claims.

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[30] Ibid., pp. 9–11.

[31] Ibid., p. 25; Fritz Klein, review of Gebhardt's *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte,* vol. IV (Stuttgart, 1959), in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft,* ix, 1, 1961, p. 227.

[32] Erhard Wörfel, review of Emil Jeschonnek, *Wo der Landser denken lernte* (Berlin, 1959), in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft,* viii, 6, 1960, p. 1473. The sentence quoted reads in full: 'In harten Auseinandersetzungen mit den Trägern des alten, reaktionären und faschistischen Geistes und angespornt durch die Aktivistenbewegung in der damaligen Sowjetischen Besatzungszone, entwickelte sich unter den Kriegsgefangenen—in der Erkenntnis der politischen und moralischen Gesamtverpflichtung des deutschen Volkes—eine Wettbewerbsbewegung zur Erreichung von Bestleistungen an der Front der Wiedergutmachung'.

[33] Wilhelm Wehling, 'Zum antifaschistischen Widerstandskampf der deutschen Arbeiterklasse während der faschistischen Vertrauensrätewahlen im Frühjahr 1935, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung,* ii, 3, 1960, p. 501.

[34] 'Streiflichter zur Geschichte der Wahlen im Dritten Reich', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte,* iii, 3, 1955, pp. 315–16.

[35] Wilhelm Wehling, loc. cit., pp. 498–99.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., p. 499.

Equally tenuous is the argument put forward by another writer in his attack on a recent West German book on the attitude of the Social Democrats towards the Reichswehr in the days of the Weimar Republic. Its author, an officer of the Bundeswehr, admits that the Reichswehr then formed a state within the state and that the army leaders, from Seeckt to Schleicher, had their own independent policy.[38] Coming from an officer of the Bundeswehr, such opinions seem to the uninitiated to be important admissions, for only if past errors are clearly seen and admitted can they be avoided in future: one might have expected even a convinced communist to rejoice at such discernment and perhaps to hope for a change of heart among the officers of today. Not so the writer: to him the thesis that the Reichswehr formed a state within the state is 'an old fairy tale', and that of the arbitrary policy of the army leaders is 'absolutely wrong' (*grundfalsch*).[39] But the only evidence which he adduces to prove his case is a statement by Seeckt that it was the task of the army 'to adapt itself to the whole machinery of the state and to subordinate itself to the interests of the state', and a sentence in the book criticised that 'the policy of the Reichswehr by necessity had to converge with the policy of the right-wing parties'.[40] Neither statement supports his assertions. Seeckt deliberately did not use the word 'Republic', but the word 'state'. While his attitude towards the Republic always remained at best lukewarm, he differentiated the state as defined by him and its alleged interests from those of the Republic which he had sworn to defend: this subtle distinction enabled him to follow his own line of policy at home and abroad, which was often diametrically opposed to that of the government. The close connections between the Reichswehr leaders and the right-wing parties equally seem to bear out the thesis that the former followed their own line of policy. It is indeed difficult to discover the logic of the reasons put forward to disprove this thesis, but perhaps there is no logic. This suspicion is confirmed when one looks at the article as a whole: on almost every page there are attacks on 'the right-wing Social Democratic leaders' (not of the days of the Weimar Republic, but of today), on 'such leaders as Erler, Wehner, Mommer, Brandt, Knoeringen', who 'in conventicles with the militarists approve of their plans of annihilation and war' and 'praise the parliamentary control of the Bundeswehr'. Allegedly, 'the right-wing Social Democratic leaders and the leading functionaries who followed them used the slogan of "a state within the state" as a welcome excuse to "prove" to their members the difficulties of a "democratisation" [of the army]'[41]: this is the reason why this kind of argument is advanced. 'The right-wing Social Democratic leaders' have to be discredited at the cost of logic and of historical truth, for the 'democratisation' of the Reichswehr and especially of its recruiting methods was one of the aims of Severing, Loebe, and other moderate leaders before 1933. But they and their successors have to be branded as the arch-villains of the piece: hence the faulty logic.

THE tendency to seek a link between recent historical books and the politics of today and to accuse their authors of underhand political motives is apparent in many articles. Those writing on the Partisan movements of the second world war are accused of aiming at 'the rehabilitation of German militarism and its representatives Heusinger, Speidel, Kammhuber, etc., who are again occupying today positions of influence in the Bonn state'. 'Such historical views have to be seen in connection with the rearmament of German Imperialism and the resurrection of its military machine under the old "tried" leadership, which is setting out once more to inflict misery

[38] 'Eigenmächtige Politik der Reichswehrleitung in der Weimarer Republik': Gustav Adolf Caspar, *Die sozialdemokratische Partei und das deutsche Wehrproblem in den Jahren der Weimarer Republik*, Frankfurt (Main), 1959, p. 28, quoted by Klaus Mammach, 'Die Militärpolitik der SPD-Führung in der Weimarer Republik in der Sicht der Bundeswehr', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, ii, 4, 1960, pp. 797, 799.

[39] Klaus Mammach, loc. cit., pp. 797, 799.

[40] Ibid., p. 798.

[41] Ibid., pp. 787, 788, 790, 795, 797, 798, 802, 805, 806, 807.

and ruin upon the peoples of the world'.[42] The venerable West German historian Hans Rothfels is chided for 'glorifying the First World War and the anti-national policy of treason of the right-wing Social Democratic leaders' during the discussions of the Stockholm Historical Congress, and is called a 'bard of German Imperialism'.[43] Another leading West German historian, Professor Erdmann, is accused of falsifying history 'with the same tendency which, for example, time and again leads in the courts of the Bonn Federal Republic to the rehabilitation, if not the heroizing, of war criminals of the Hitler army'.[44] Even the book of an American scholar, Harold J. Gordon, *The Reichswehr and the German Republic, 1919–1926*, comes in for this kind of abuse. It is true that his book is somewhat naive, that he largely misunderstands the policy of General von Seeckt and the whole position of the Reichswehr, and that it can be criticised on other grounds. But that does not mean that it is 'rehabilitation, ably put forward, of the German militarists', an 'historical alibi for the present militarisation of Western Germany', or an 'historical arsenal for the justification and defence of the German Imperialist rearmament policy of those days as well as of the present', as the reviewer puts it.[45] At this level any serious discussion becomes impossible.

This does not mean that the criticisms of West German historians by those of the East are always unjustified: on the contrary, if they dropped the abuse and returned to academic standards of historical criticism, they might have something useful to say. Thus even the friends of Professor Gerhard Ritter might admit (as has been admitted in Western Germany) that his definition of militarism is 'eclectic and subjectivistic', that he 'almost completely identifies the Goerdeler group with the whole anti-fascist resistance movement' in Germany, that Lutheranism is so closely linked with his political ideas 'that he almost thinks politically in religious terms and believes religiously in political terms'. And one can hardly suppress a smile at the picture of Professor Ritter trying 'to bring as much as possible from the reactionary Prussian and German past into the newly opened shop of the "western world"' or of his reprimanding Sir John Wheeler-Bennett 'in the tones of a Prussian sergeant' when the latter published his *Nemesis of Power*.[46] All this seems quite true to life.

There is also justification in the East German attacks on those West German historians who were prominent in advocating Nazi ideology. This applies particularly in the case of Erich Rothacker, whose *Geschichtsphilosophie*, published in 1934, is still being sold in Western Germany and was translated into Spanish as recently as 1951. If the West German historians put forward Professor Rothacker as one of their principal speakers at the Stockholm Historical Congress, this was simply asking for a counter-attack, which duly materialised.[47] And the quotations from Rothacker's *Geschichtsphilosophie* which it incorporated deserved to be resurrected: 'The decisive steps towards German unity we clearly owe not to the Nordic race, which is purer in Scandinavia, but to the "Prussian spirit" and the spirit of the NSDAP, that is in either case to forms of life which have been fought for. . . . This, of course, does not mean a departure from the final goal and wish of a German culture racially not only brilliantly bred, but also in its soul developed according to the style of life of Nordic nations . . .' And: 'From this, with the sure instinct of the great statesman, Adolf Hitler drew the conclusions by giving in his book of life pride of place in

[42] Heinz Kühnreich, 'Die Darstellung der Partisanenbewegung in der westdeutschen Historiographie', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 1, 1960, pp. 10–11.

[43] By Walter Bartel and Hans-Joachim Bernhard in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, ix, 1, 1961, pp. 178–79.

[44] Fritz Klein, ibid., p. 227.

[45] Erwin Könnemann, review of H. J. Gordon, *Die Reichswehr und die Weimarer Republik 1919–1926* (Frankfurt (Main), 1959), in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, ix, 1, 1961, pp. 217, 221.

[46] The quotations are taken from Heinz Heitzer's review of Werner Berthold, '. . . *grosshungern und gehorchen*' (Berlin, 1960), in *Zeitschrift für Geschichteswissenschaft*, ix, 1, 1961, pp. 212, 215, 216.

[47] Werner Berthold, 'Ueber "Die Wirkung der Geschichtsphilosophie . . . " von Erich Rothacker', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 6, 1960.

the scale of political values to the idea of *Volksgemeinschaft*'. And: 'Meanwhile the victory of the National Revolution has erected together with the foundation of the Third Reich a new picture of Man'.[48] It is clear, of course, that these facts have been dug out by the East German historians to discredit their West German colleagues; yet it is useful to be reminded of them.

It is also important to be reminded of the close connections between German industry and the Nazi Party, and in particular of those between the I.G. Farben and the concentration camps which supplied its factories with slave labour, as does an article on the Circle of Friends of Heinrich Himmler.[49] But this article, too, is written for a specific political end: to discredit people prominent in West German industry, whose names are given with the positions which they are holding today.[50] All this has nothing to do with scholarship or with research as they are understood in other countries. The historians of Eastern Germany are serving a master, the leadership of the SED, and are executing orders, trying to prove or disprove a case according to the demands of political expediency, to discredit people because of the prominent positions they held in Western Germany; it is sad to see to what level historical scholarship has sunk, and how primitive and faulty most arguments have become, primitive and faulty even where they might have been more accurate and telling. Was this too inevitable under 'the purposeful directives of Walter Ulbricht'?[51]

[48] Ibid., pp. 1305–06.
[49] Klaus Dobrisch, 'Der Freundeskreis Himmler', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, viii, 2, 1960.
[50] Ibid., pp. 311–13, 322 n. 115.
[51] For not knowing these 'purposeful directives' the Belgian historian Henri Haag is chided by Walter Bartel and Hans-Joachim Bernhard in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, ix, 1, 1961, p. 172, in their report on the Stockholm Historical Congress.

THE REVIEW

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CONTENTS

1961. No. 2

Commemorating the Paris Commune of 1871

Editorial: Cooperation Between Socialist Reviews and Periodicals
Socialism in India, by Hector Abhayavardhan
Hungarian Workers' Road to the Revolution, by Zoltan Sztaray
Political Representation, by Balazs Nagy

Evidence: My Experiences in the Central Workers' Council of Greater Budapest, by Miklos Sebestyén

Survey: On the Aims and Programmes of: *MANKIND, NEW POLITICS, THE SOCIALIST LEADER*

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A NOTE ON POLISH LITERATURE

T. Nowakowski

A FEW years ago I sat on a literary jury in London that was judging the diaries of ex-Polish soldiers in the West who had covered half the world in their marches, in order finally to not reach a free Poland. It amazed me at the time that none of these brave Odysseuses devoted a single page to the countries covered in their marches. They had been in Egypt without noticing either pyramids or the Nile, and preferred to describe instead the beauties of their own lost paradise, their native villages and small provincial towns. They reminded me of the Polish country squire described in Kozmian's diaries of the last century, who stopped suddenly in the middle of Venice's Bridge of Sighs, exclaiming: 'Jésu Maria, it's market day in Sieradz to-day!'.

Many thousands of patriots, hypnotically marching towards the same goal, are hardly typical; their reactions can be explained only in the complex image of exodus. What can one say then about the literature of a people who, far from being a collection of nomads, is living its own life on its own soil, professing a fanatical religion of reconstruction in all aspects of its life, and yet appearing to share the attitude of those bemused travellers? In assessing recent Polish literature, which is undoubtedly thoroughly European in its essence, we are instantly struck by its peculiar polono-centrism.

From time to time I am asked by Western publishing houses which of the latest Polish writings should be published They have in mind, of course, works that might interest the non-Polish reader. It is then, I confess, that I have serious difficulty in finding suitable authors and titles. Why? Because the great majority of Polish writers see the affairs of our world in a too-Polish perspective. This is not a question of subject-matter. The Scandinavians, when their literature was flourishing, did not write books which turned their backs on their own traditions or ethnography, 'chemically pure' books where the action took place in a vacuum; on the contrary, Hamsun's works have their roots deep in his native soil, and in spite of this (or possibly because of it), the affairs of his heroes are of universal human interest. Wladyslaw Reymont, the author of *Peasants* (the Polish Nobel Prize winner) wrote a novel about the Polish village, but wrote it in such a way that it claimed the interest of people all over the world, and not only of his compatriots. The same is true of the very Russian novel of Pasternak. So, too, the works St. John Perse, who said that 'France is to me the archetype, holy and unique; I can see only through her, only through her can I identify myself with the all-human!', belong not only to French but to world literature. Can it really be only a question of language barriers?

It is significant that, although the directors of today's cultural policy on the Vistula talk and write so much about national solidarity, about the common ideals of people of different races and colours, the latest Polish literature does not equal its nineteenth century predecessor in universality. The romantic 'citizens of the world' did not live in the intellectual ghetto that their great-grandsons inhabit today. Even when there appears some work which attempts to overstep the narrow boundaries of the Polish court-yard, it has an insincere ring, like the recitation of a clever pupil.

The work of the writer Leon Kruczkowski provides an example of this provincialism. His pre-war novels on traditional Polish themes, such as the struggle against the Tsarist government or protests against the social injustice suffered by the peasants (*Kordian and Cham*, *Peacock's Feathers*) brought him well-deserved fame as an able novelist, while all his later, carefully planned attempts to write something on a theme with universal international appeal (*The Germans*, *The Rosenbergs*, *The First Day of Freedom*) have not added to his laurels as playwright. A record number of performances from Vladivostok to Prague means little,

if anything; it is a fallible criterion. The correct 'humanistic' rhetoric in attempts of this kind assures the reader or the audience that no intellectual or spiritual trap awaits them, that no new artistic forms will be sprung upon them.

IN spite of overwhelmingly native themes in recent Polish literature, the impatient planners of cultural policy on the Vistula (and how much more liberal they are than their colleagues in Sofia, Prague or East Berlin!) complain ceaselessly about the alleged lack of interest among Polish writers in contemporary themes. What more do they want? In almost every number of *Nowa Kultura* we read programmatic articles encouraging the writing of novels and plays and the making of films about Polish life today. (Naturally, 'black literature', like Wazyk's 'Poem for Adults', is not recommended!) 'There are too many works about the past and not enough about the present', says one of the official prompters, Andrzej Werblan. Do they not know that any literary work, regardless of its theme, is a manifestation of contemporary life? That even the historical novel by Antoni Golubiev about King Boleslaw the Brave (992–1025), highly regarded in post-war Poland, represents the attitude of today's writer to the past, and is thus a reflection of the present? It would never have been written if Poland had not gone through the trials of the second world war and the shift of her frontier westwards. It was the same story before, when Polish novelists, writing about ancient Egypt (Prus) or Rome (Sienkiewicz) looked at Rameses or Nero through Polish eyes and saw them in the light of Poland's historical experiences at that time. And so it is today: Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz's excellent novella about seventeenth century England (*The Battle on the Plain of Sedgemoor*) echoes the tragedy of the Warsaw rising (1944), while more can be learnt by reading between the lines of Jerzy Andrzejewski's novel *The Inquisitors* about Poland in the years of the co-called *Beriovshchina* than about the Spanish Inquisition.

When Sartre published his impressions of his visit to Cuba, it was said sarcastically in Paris cafés that it was easier to write about existentialism than about Cuba's problems. With us it seems to be the other way round. Polish writers find it too difficult to write about anything which is not Polish. Only in recent years have a few of them managed to write something valuable on non-Polish themes or rather not-quite-Polish themes (the Italian short stories of emigré writer Gustaw Herling-Grudzinski). Most such attempts have ended, significantly enough, in failure.

Tadeusz Breza's book about the Vatican (*The Gate of Brass*), now enjoying a great vogue in Warsaw and collecting numerous literary prizes, can serve as an illustration of the thesis about the dangers of a polono-centric point of view. Although it is beautifully written, it could hardly interest any but the Polish reader, for many years starved of gossip from far countries; its revelations would hardly be novelties to the Western reader. It is marred by a great number of 'polonica' of a propagandist nature, and it was not without a certain justification that the author, at one time on the staff of the Polish Embassy in Rome, was accused of seeing the College of Cardinals as a sort of Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Poland is a Roman Catholic country. This is not only a statistical fact ('Roman-Catholic People's Democracy', wrote the Paris *Humanité* ironically at the time of the October events). The opposition of the Church to communist ideology is the number one problem of post-war Poland. Religiousness in Polish society, especially among the masses, is incomparably greater now than thirty years ago. Nevertheless it would be untrue to say that Catholic literature in Poland is flourishing. It is significant that since 1947 (*From the Land of Silence*, by Wojciech Zukrowski) there has been nothing of great interest. Polish Catholic literature is short of young talent. The most able young Polish writers (Stanislaw Grochowiak, Witold Dabrowski, Bohdan Drozdowski, Roman Sliwonik, Marian Greszczak) are grouped round the periodical *Wspolczesnosc* and are outside Catholic territory. During the October ferment the main supporters of the intellectual rebellion were young Marxists.

It would be stupid to reproach Polish Catholic literature for not having produced a Polish Mauriac, Maritain, Bernanos, Graham Greene, or Evelyn Waugh; but it can be charged with provincialism. Although the 'Wiez' group in Warsaw is constantly recommending Polish Catholicism to model itself on courageous French Catholicism, and not on the conservative Spanish, all the most popular Polish Catholic writers (Zofia Kossak, Jan Dobraczynski) prefer to cloister themselves in devotional themes.

IN point of fact, Polish literature suffers, as it were, from a complex of 'not belonging' with the rest of the world. A psycho-analyst of the history of culture would have a couchful here. For although Polish writing is undoubtedly European in spirit, its attitude to the other countries of Europe can hardly be called normal and healthy. This is largely because of atavistic handicaps, like the still rankling memory of partition, of its unfortunate geo-political position, and the lack of democratic liberties. It must not be forgotten that in the nineteenth century, so important in the development of Western civilisation and culture, Poland did not appear on the map of the world, and its literature was occupied in a way best described by the critic Karol Irzykowski's ironic: 'Our poor, patriotic Mädchen für alles!'. While others could point to their flourishing science, culture, and art, the Poles were busy defending themselves against germanisation and russification. One French philosopher who had recently visited Cracow found it very strange that most of the Poles to whom he had talked, mostly university professors, stressed at every available opportunity that Poland was a Western country. Declarations of this kind were made against the backcloth of the Renaissance Wawel and the gothic church of St. Mary. 'It is strange', said the Frenchman. 'Why are they always saying it? Is it possible that they themselves doubt it? Here, in Paris, no one talks about belonging to Europe. We simply *are* in Europe'.

Even in the tiniest provincial town near Lwow or Wilno little hotels were grandly named 'Europe'. The excellent critic and translator Tadeusz Boy-Zelenski, thanks to whose efforts, it was said in Warsaw before the war, the Vistula became a right-hand tributary of the Seine, once jokingly called Jan Parandowski, the author of a novel about Oscar Wilde, 'A church-slavonic humanist with a Europe-complex'. I do not seem to have come across any French writer alleging that another French writer suffered from a Europe-complex.

After the iron curtain of Stalinism dropped over Poland, the country's culture was forcibly cut off from its European roots; its intellectual life was not devastated, nor its mental life completely curbed (as Czeslaw Milosz had rashly feared in his interesting study *The Captive Mind*). But, like the German occupation, the experience stamped its imprint on the creative forces on the Vistula. A price has to be paid for participation in struggle and resistance, for existing in an atmosphere of intramural mobilisation. It is paid by individuals, by their society, and by their art.

Reading Polish post-war literature, I notice a phenomenon which amounts to a self-defensive conviction about the superiority of Polish 'survivors' to other Europeans. This feeling of superiority grew out of the sum total of the tragic experiences of the last twenty years. This is not the time or place to debate whether suffering does in fact ennoble and increase the understanding of this hardly best of all worlds. Is maturity really achieved as the result of disaster? It is difficult not to shake one's head when reading a sentence like 'What can they, sitting behind curtained windows in their brightly lit rooms, what can they understand of life as we understand it?', which occurs in the book by the novelist Adolf Rudnicki about his journey to Vienna, *Green Leaves*. The characters in Tadeusz Rozewicz's short story *The Interrupted Examination* speak, feel, and think similarly, and his stories were the most interesting literary event of 1960. In *The Most Beautiful City in the World*, a compact, savage, and beautifully written story, his heroes, Polish 'survivors' entangled in their tragic past and its memories (not always comprehensible to the rest of the world), and suffering from a Slav-like inclination to psychological exhibitionism and self-pity, feel that Paris is hell. They remind one

of the words of Ortega y Gasset—'The only sincere thoughts are those of the shipwrecked'. Similarly Stefan Kisielewski, contributor to the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, returns from his journey to the West with a heavy sigh: 'What do they understand? Our spiritual life is richer!'. How familiar is this desire to add a halo of moral virtue to a situation undeservedly forced upon one!

Even a writer as experienced as Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz, a master of the psychological novel, bids his pile of tragic experiences against 'those of the West' in *Wzlot* (*Ascent*), written as a challenge to Camus' *The Fall*. This is typical of the misunderstandings arising from the temptation to dispense justice to the world from a polono-centric point of view. A young and disillusioned Pole, his youth wrecked by the war and the years that followed, is bid against the hero of Camus' *The Fall*. 'On the one hand we have a bookish, abstract example from Camus, and on the other our naked life, a real, not a literary hell'. Yet this shattering Polish case presented by Iwaszkiewicz, this veritable 'Polish journey into hell', has only as much in common with the Frenchman's moral tale as a tragic mishap in the life of a prostitute has with an ancient tragedy. The moral conflict described by Camus, his philosophical allegory, could take place anywhere in space and time; it possesses an eternal fourth dimension and is therefore of greater interest than the fate of a Polish 'desperado' who is the victim of specific social and political circumstances. And though thousands of young Poles may have touched hell with the soles of their feet (and this, we know, has really happened), art has its own rules, and the interesting historical and sociological experiences of a large group of people are only so many chips which do not determine the outcome of the game.

FRANKLY, the majority of Polish writers who witnessed history in the making (both those in Poland and those in exile), and who wanted to preserve their experiences from oblivion by translating them into the permanent language of art, have not succeeded. In vain did the Warsaw poet cry: 'Do not speak to me of Dante's inferno! Compared to the Warsaw ghetto it is but the plaything of medieval theologians'.

'Ich bin keine Vieh, ich kann nicht vergessen!'—I am not an animal, I cannot forget—says Electra in Hofmannstal's play. This is the motto of dozens of books written in the wake of moral indignation. Some made their confessions in a whisper (Adolf Rudnicki, Czeslaw Milosz, Tadeusz Rozewicz), some cried aloud (Tadeusz Borowski), forgetting Berthold Brecht's warning: 'Auch der Hass gegen die Niedrigkeit verzerrt die Züge, auch der Zorn über das Unrecht macht die Stimme heiser'—hatred even of infamy distorts the face; anger, even over injustice, makes the voice hoarse.

A work of literature which adequately captures in any measure at all what the Poles have suffered during the last twenty years has not been written yet, and it is impossible to say whether it ever will be. Instead, a rich literary archive has been collected about the suffering inflicted in the times of the brown plague and the Stalinist night. (An authentic masterpiece decribing experiences in Soviet Russia has appeared, needless to say, outside Poland, Gustaw Herling's *A World Apart*, with its conscious echo of Dostoevski's *Notes From the House of the Dead*).

A future student of Polish letters will not be able to overlook the works, uneven in standard and heavy with political overtones, written in the period of 'pre-October ferment': Adam Wazyk, Wiktor Woroszylski's *Cruel Star*, the neo-Voltairean tales of the philosopher Leszek Kolakowski, some short stories by Marek Hlasko, in short, that rebellion of a cheated generation, that earthquake which occurred after the XXth CPSU Congress in Moscow, 'when Stalin died a second time'.

Such heretical demonstrations in Poland were greatly encouraged by the moral attitude of Maria Dabrowska ('First Lady of Polish Literature', the author of *Nights and Days*, one of the best Polish novels of the last forty years), as well as the civil courage of the poet Antoni Slonimski, who, when Pasternak was being condemned in Moscow, publicly recited an ode in his honour. And the day also

dawned when the 'men of October' could count on the support of the miraculously converted ex-favourites of the native Polish diehards, such as Kazimierz Brandys, full of the zeal of the newly-converted. Two of his books, *Defence of Granada* and *Sons and Comrades*, undoubtedly helped to undermine 'the kingdom of plaster of Paris figures' (as the poet Mieczyslaw Jastrun called it). Brandys is a typically polono-centric writer. After a visit to Italy he produced a book concerned with Polish affairs (*Letters to Mrs. Z*), and his attempt to write a novella about post-war Germany was a complete artistic failure. This was true also of Jan Dobraczynski's new book *Hands on the Wall*. It is amazing what clichés Polish writers use when writing about their Western neighbours!

It is equally significant that although so much is written and said in Warsaw about Polish-Soviet friendship, 'becoming deeper year by year', contemporary Polish literature cannot produce any artistically worthwhile evidence of this friendship. There are those who maintain that political and artistic truths are interdependent; but this is not so. Igor Newerly's *Souvenir from a Cellulose Factory*, woven out of political untruths, is a successful work of literature, and the novel by Jerzy Andrzejewski, *Ashes and Diamonds*, based on a rather shaky political truth, must be included among the best works of Polish post-war literature.

Even the few communist writers, who at official ceremonies speak of Soviet communism as their inspiration, prefer to avoid the subject of communism in their works. True, there are a lot of apologetical pot-boilers dating from the 'past period' (the euphemistic name given to the Stalinist winter), but I do not know of any real work of art in contemporary Poland which can claim to have been inspired by it. The last Polish writer for whom Russia held a genuine fascination was Stefan Zeromski. It may be unpleasant, but it is true to say that the majority of Polish writers who have written about Russia since Zeromski have only increased the already large collection of artistic failures.

This literary boycott of Poland's eastern neighbour, like the aversion of Polish university students to Russian studies, should bring no comfort even to the most extreme anti-communist. It is in the interest of Polish culture to be concerned with the whole world.

IL MULINO

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La crisi cubana, a cura di Giorgio Galli e Victor B. Sullam
Controrivoluzione o nuova resistenza? di Leone Iraci Fedeli
Fine dell'Europa dei Sei, di Altiero Spinelli
I piani regionali di sviluppo, di Mario D'Erme
Considerazioni extravaganti sulla agitazione dei professionisti, di Angiola Sbaiz
La "carriera" dei giudici
Lo sciopero degli incaricati
Il linguaggio degli studenti: una lettera e una postilla
In tema di celebrazioni dell'Unità: il congresso storico internazionale di Palermo, di Aldo Berselli
Cristianesimo africano, di Alfonso Prandi
Schedario: problemi contemporanei, storia, scienze sociali, scienze economiche, narrativa, saggistica e critica letteraria, religione, filosofia, epistemolcgia.

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

Professor Polanyi and his Critics

Peter Kende

It seems to me that in the interesting discussion which followed Professor Polanyi's *exposé*, his real subject, i.e., the idea summarised by the unusual term of 'conspicuous production', has been somewhat neglected. The brilliant economists whose comments you invited have subjected Professor Polanyi's theory to a check of a technical order. But unless I am mistaken, the author of *The Logic of Liberty* intended to place the discussion on a different plane: that of first principles.

It must be admitted that the realm of the *motives* of Soviet economy remains insufficiently explored. All agree that Soviet production is not aimed at increasing anyone's profits, all the more so as it is organised in a way that renders the notion of profit senseless. What, in these conditions, is the ultimate purpose of planning and its application? The answers vary according to different authors and schools of thought, and all too often they suffer from incoherence. At the end of an original argument, Professor Polanyi tells us that the overriding motive is 'conspicuity'—and his answer has the undeniable merit of defining something which so far has eluded generalisation.

Mr. Seton is right to observe that 'conspicuity' should not be identified with 'wastefulness', nor with the spectacular neglect of the consumer's needs, since it can just as well be directed towards objectives that could be qualified as 'economically valid'. Nevertheless, one should see the limits beyond which conspicuous production can no longer be compared to an economy determined by marginal demand. Indeed, if it had no other ambition than to claim for itself what is considered valid by market standards, what would be its *raison d'être*? How could it justify the sacrifices which it imposes on society in order to preserve it from all spontaneous pressures? As long as centralised planning remains inspired by the same ideology, it is highly unlikely that it will cease giving priority to conspicuity over productivity, i.e., to the pursuit of statistically impressive prestige targets over economic balance without glamour, to abstract growth over the immediate satisfaction of consumer needs. It is true that as development proceeds, prestige and balance, expansion and consumption, grow less and less incompatible. Nevertheless, I believe that even in its statistical form, Professor Polanyi's theory of conspicuous production enables us to distinguish better between an economy dominated by profitability and one which is determined by administrative criteria.

The second point I would like to make concerns the scope of what is administratively feasible, or controllable. On this point Professor Polanyi's argument is summary and, to my mind, presupposes knowledge of one of his previous studies, in which he has proved that beyond a certain limit ($n=20$), polycentric objectives cannot be determined with sufficient precision (*Logic of Liberty*, pp. 171–75). It is a great pity that the theory of planned economy does not, to my knowledge, take into account either the polycentric nature of the problems to be resolved, or the fundamental obstacles encountered. Yet the existence of such a precision limit (which, let it be stressed, is not tied to a particular mathematical method: it applies to electronic computers as well as to solutions by successive approximations) is of course fraught with consequences for an economic system that aims to replace the market. So long as it is a question of planning current production, routine—the experience of past years—relieves the central planner of the necessity to undertake impossible calculations. But when the moment comes to allocate available resources between alternative investment projects, the planner is faced with a problem that is polycentric *par excellence*, since every possible allocation affects the choice as a whole. Let us note, by the way, that the marginal investor never finds himself in a similar situation, first because the number of alternatives open to him is limited, and second, because his choice will be guided by reference to price structure and

rates of interest. For the central planner, on the contrary, the problem consists precisely in knowing if his decisions (of which price structure also forms a part) correspond to the best utilisation of the totality of resources: a polycentric problem which, at a conservative estimate, requires a system of several thousand equations. As the correct solution of such a problem presupposes perfect and detailed knowledge of all data (for in a calculation of this nature the smallest initial error is multiplied to the point of depriving the final result of all meaning), it is in fact beyond the reach of the planner. The latter is condemned to grope in the dark—this by the way is the case also with competitive economy. But, in view of the polycentric nature of the economic task, the method of successive and marginal approximations operated simultaneously by a multitude of agents, ultimately offers a better chance of arriving at a rational result than the central calculation of the single agent of the planned economy. It is in this sense that Professor Polanyi's remarks on the limits of administrative power open up an important new field of research. At any rate, the subject deserves more attention than it is receiving today in economic theory.

Finally, I would like to add a word to what Professor Polanyi calls 'the pretence of central direction'. Whether it is efficient or not, this pretence certainly constitutes a heavy burden for the planned economy. Mr. Shonfield quotes the opinion of Oscar Lange, according to whom 'all the important purposes of central planning could be achieved if control were exercised over a fairly small, critical proportion of investment expenditure'. However, it is important to realise that *this is not what is actually happening* and that 'conspicuous production' is linked with unprecedented administrative rigidity. May I compare central direction to a post office management which is not content to decree general measures for the running of postal services, but instead compels local post offices to draw up each day after the arrival of the mail a plan of the postmen's rounds, indicating in detail the number, weight, etc., of the letters to be distributed; this plan is then sent to the centre, which in turn quickly attempts to streamline the various distribution rounds by 'rationalising the work', i.e., by transporting part of the postmen from places where traffic is less heavy that day to places where it is more congested; then the centre sends the rectified operational plans back to the local post offices, demanding in return a report on the quantity of petrol allocated to the transport of mail—all this in order to control indirectly the implementation of the 'plans'. Let us imagine for an instant that it is possible to fit this exchange of instructions and reports into one working day, and that the same process could be repeated daily. . . . Sheer lunacy? Yes, but then something of this kind is still happening even today in the economic system of 'conspicuous production'.

CPSU HISTORY IN THE REMAKING

Leopold Labedz

The English edition [1] of the new Soviet textbook on party history which replaced the old *Short Course*, the Bible of the Stalin era, has finally been produced, reaching the English reading public almost two years after the original and eight years after Stalin's death.

The new version was slow in coming. After the condemnation of the *Short Course* by Khrushchev in his secret speech at the 20th Congress, a 10-member editorial board under B. N. Ponomaryov was set up to prepare a popular, Marxist textbook of party history, based on historical facts. It was to be ready within a year, but the vicissitudes of history, the struggle for power among Stalin's heirs, and the 1956 upheaval in Eastern Europe delayed its completion. Too many delicate points needed careful reinterpretation and too many of Stalin's *entourage* were falling by the wayside. Only with the consolidation of power of the new party secretary did the new official version of party history appear. The first edition was sold out in a few hours.

[1] Ponomaryov, B. N. (Edit.), *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow; 1960. pp. 766. 10s.

Stalin's place in history

As could be expected, the most striking difference between the old and the new presentation of the 'historical facts' is the role attributed to Stalin. The *Short Course* was, of course, one of the instruments of Stalin's self-aggrandisement in which he attributed to himself deeds performed by other actors. Having liquidated them, he either retrospectively ascribed treacherous actions to them or erased their names altogether from the history of the revolution.

The new version puts Stalin in his place, without giving back their real role to the original actors. In the *Short Course*, Stalin was first mentioned in connection with his pronouncement on the Baku strike of 1904 and it was stressed that before the 1905 revolution he 'was carrying on tremendous revolutionary work in Transcaucasia . . . He resolutely prepared the workers for the decisive battle against the autocracy'. These and many other references, often joining Stalin's activity to that of Lenin before, during, and after the 1917 revolution, are now omitted. The differences among the Bolshevik leaders after the February revolution and before Lenin's return from exile receive new treatment. The *Short Course* stated that

> Kamenev and several workers of the Moscow organisation, for example, Rykov, Bubnov and Nogin, held a semi-Menshevik position of conditionally supporting the Provisional Government and the policy of the partisans of war. Stalin, who had just returned from exile, Molotov and others, together with the majority of the party, upheld a policy of non-confidence in the Provisional Government, opposed the partisans of war, and called for an active struggle against the imperialist war.

The new textbook repeats that 'Kamenev took up a semi-Menshevik position' towards the Provisional Government, but adds that 'Stalin at first took up an erroneous position, suggesting pressure on the Provisional Government to begin peace talks immediately, but he soon abandoned this view and associated himself with Lenin'.

Stalin's role in the revolution and Civil War is deflated and several historical falsifications of it are now dismissed. But he has not been reduced to a secondary role, although he is often made to appear one among many in the company of other Bolshevik leaders. Not infrequently, he is presented as the spokesman of the party, at a discreet distance behind Lenin, but unmistakably the most important among Lenin's followers.

As before, Trotsky's role is falsified, but in a different way. The *Short Course* claimed that the Bolshevik uprising in October 1917 was directed by a *Party Centre*, headed by Stalin. The new text attributes the organisation of the uprising to the *Revolutionary Military Centre* of the Central Committee which formed part of the *Revolutionary Military Committee* of the Petrograd Soviet. It was in this last body that Trotsky played such an important role in the preparation of the Bolshevik revolution. But this is not disclosed. He is no longer accused of having 'blabbed the date of the uprising to the enemy' (as is still alleged in the introduction to the latest edition of John Reed's *Ten Days that shook the World*), but in a truly Solomonic fashion 'the entire work of organising the insurrection' is assigned to Lenin who 'summoned the members of the *Revolutionary Military Committee*. . .'. Thus one of Stalin's personal myths is demolished, without being replaced by a truthful account of what actually happened.

Another such myth, that of Stalin's feats on the southern front in the Civil War, is similarly abolished. It was fostered assiduously in his lifetime. The defence of Tsaritsyn and his plan to defeat Denikin (which, according to the previous version, replaced the suspicious strategic proposals of Trotsky) were the two artificial props used to establish Stalin's title to glory in the Civil War. Now, though the new textbook states that 'the military council of the North Caucasus region was headed by J. V. Stalin', it maintains that 'the brunt of the defence of Tsaritsyn was borne by the workers' detachments . . . under the leadership of K. Y. Voroshilov'. Similarly, although it refers to the change in 'the original plan for delivering the main blow from the Tsaritsyn area [which] no longer met the requirements of the moment' and to its replacement by another plan, it does not mention Stalin as its author.

Nor is the failure of the Red Army in the battle of Warsaw in 1920 attributed this time to 'the wrecker's order issued by Trotsky' but simply to 'the mistakes made by the Soviet command'. Stalin's role in the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary periods, though not made negligible, is definitely diminished.

However, in the chapters devoted to the struggle against the opposition, he comes into his own. True, Lenin's testament, which gave a negative assessment of Stalin's character and proposed that he be replaced by somebody else, is quoted, but it is explained that the Party Congress

> bearing in mind the services rendered by Stalin—his uncompromising struggle against Trotskyism and other anti-party groups—declared for his continuing as General Secretary, on the condition, however, that he paid heed to Lenin's criticism and drew the necessary conclusions from it.

Stalin's services in defeating the opposition receive full personal praise. His pamphlets are quoted as defending Leninism, and his book *Problems of Leninism* is described as helping 'the communists in combating distortions of Leninism . . . to strengthen the faith of the working class in the possibility of building a socialist society in the Soviet Union with their own force, without waiting for state aid from the West European proletariat'.

Cult without personality

In comparison with the period of Stalin's struggle for power, his personal rule in the subsequent two decades is heavily played down. He is mentioned only occasionally and is then presented as subordinate to some sort of collective polity: he published his article 'Dizzy with Success' according to 'the decision of the Central Committee', he 'was *put* at the head of the armed forces' during the war, etc. All the historically important political and economic decisions are attributed to the 'wise policy of the party and the Soviet Government' and it is impossible to learn from the new textbook what the 'personality cult of J. V. Stalin', which it condemns, was like. Nor for that matter can one learn anything about its causes or its consequences. The new textbook refers to 'direct violations of party and Soviet democracy' and of 'the principle of collective leadership': Stalin decided 'many important questions on his own'. But we are not told what these questions were. All political decisions that are specifically mentioned are praised unreservedly.

The same curious double treatment is applied to all the post-war ideological *causes célèbres*. The resolutions of the Central Committee of 1946 and 1948, which led to the persecution of writers and artists are mentioned favourably. This despite the fact that they were partly rescinded afterwards, having allegedly resulted from the harmful influence exercised by Beria and Malenkov on Stalin. The Lysenko affair, Stalin's contributions to linguistics, and his 'Economic Problems of Socialism' are also referred to in a half-approving though elliptical way. These 'discussions held in various fields of science on the initiative of the party helped to remove a number of ideological distortions, strengthened the party principle in science and raised the standard of scientific research. However, under the influence of the Stalin personality cult, these discussions had negative consequences as well'.

The final verdict on Stalin is nonetheless quite favourable:

> The party criticism of the personality cult was essentially aimed at eliminating the harmful consequences of this cult and thereby strengthening the positions of Socialism, and was *not* a sweeping denial of the positive role played by Stalin in the life of the party and the country. Under the leadership of the Communist Party and its Central Committee, in which Stalin played a leading role, the Soviet Union made tremendous, epoch-making progress. Stalin did much for the Soviet Union, for the C.P.S.U., and for the entire international working-class movement.

Thus Stalin emerges somewhat battered from this operation, but not as mauled as he was in Khrushchev's speech. He remains a 'positive hero' of our time despite 'the serious mistakes committed by him in the last period of his life'.

It was obviously decided that the legitimacy of the regime left by Stalin to his heirs might be seriously undermined if he were to be classed with the powers of darkness.

The Moscow Trials

The Moscow Trials of 1936–38 are simply not mentioned in this new 'history'. The *Short Course* called Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev the 'real and direct organisers of the murder of Kirov'. The new textbook diplomatically announces that the murderer was an 'embittered renegade' (with a party card) who 'had been connected with some of the former members of the Zinovievist anti-party group'.

However, though the members of the opposition are still attacked as enemies of the party

they are no longer accused of being 'a gang of fascist hirelings' engaged in 'spying and wrecking activities'. Nevertheless, only one of the defendants in the Moscow Trials has been rehabilitated so far, the First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party, Akmal Ikramov, who was shot in 1938. His rehabilitation was disclosed in Volume III of the Small Soviet Encyclopedia. The new textbook does not refer to it and glides over the Moscow trials and all their victims. Their names are occasionally mentioned in Soviet publications, and recently Zinoviev was presented in a not unsympathetic light in a novel by Kazakevich.

Tukhachevsky

The treatment of other important figures is no less revealing. The new textbook draws a curtain of silence over Marshal M. N. Tukhachevsky. The *Short Course* asserted that success in the Soviet-Polish war of 1920 was 'frustrated by the suspicious actions' of Trotsky and Tukhachevsky. The latest edition of the Large Soviet Encyclopedia accused Tukhachevsky of 'collusion with the enemy'. But Volume 51 of the same Encyclopedia, published in 1958, rehabilitated him and described him as 'an outstanding military leader'. The 'rehabilitation' was short-lived. After the dismissal of Marshal Zhukov, Tukhachevsky's name disappeared from the list of commanders selected for honourable mention in Soviet journals and now the omission has been made official. He has been erased from the pages of the new party history, only to be once again rehabilitated later on.

Two of his co-defendants in the 1937 trial, I. P. Uborevich and I. Ye. Yakir, who had also been 'rehabilitated', are missing from the newly-constellated galaxy of the military heroes of the Civil War, some of whom, such as Marshal V. K. Bluecher, had also only recently been recalled from the house of the dead.

Tukhachevsky's 'de-rehabilitation' has probably prevented the recollection of his role in the suppression of the Kronstadt revolt. It is Voroshilov's 'valour and heroism' that are recalled in that connection.

Beria and Yezhov

The Great Purge is described obliquely, the chronology of events being deliberately confused. Beria, who replaced Yezhov at the end of the Purge, is made to precede him. Yezhov, who was mentioned favourably in the first edition of the *Short Course*, but disappeared from the second, has now reappeared, but in a different role. The allusion to the Great Purge is almost explicit:

> Many honest communists and non-party people, not guilty of any offence, also became victims of these repressions. During this period the political adventurer and scoundrel, Beria, who did not stop short at any atrocity to achieve his criminal aims worked his way into responsible positions in the state, and, taking advantage of Stalin's personal shortcomings, slandered and exterminated many honest people, devoted to the party and the people.
>
> In the same period a despicable role was played by Yezhov, the then People's Commissar for Home Affairs. Many workers, both communists and non-party people, who were utterly devoted to the cause of the party, were slandered with his assistance and perished. Yezhov and Beria were duly punished for their crimes.

One can only surmise what that punishment was in Yezhov's case, since it is not disclosed. The anonymity of the period is otherwise striking: no names of other party leaders active at the time are mentioned.

Molotov and Kaganovich

The party historians have had new difficulties added to their old ones in dealing with Soviet leaders. The taboo put on Stalin's victims in the *Short Course* has now been extended to some of his 'closest counsellors'. The purged Stalinist Old Guard has joined the purged Leninist Old Guard in the communist purgatorio. The Orwellian 'memory hole' technique is applied to some, but with the others it is the evaporated memory of their deeds that the authors rely upon.

Except in two instances, the names of Molotov and Kaganovich are deleted from the new text, until it comes to the defeat of the 'anti-party group' in June 1957. In the *Short Course* there was a reference to the struggle against the 'anti-party groupings' at the time of the 10th Congress; now it has disappeared. No wonder, for it maintained that in the Ukraine the struggle was 'led by Comrade Molotov . . . [and] in Central Asia, the fight against the anti-party groupings was headed by Comrade L. Kaganovich'.

The *Short Course* affirmed that 'the Red Army was victorious . . . because the political

education of the Red Army was in the hands of men like Lenin, Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin, Sverdlov, Kaganovich. . .'. Now the list of the architects of victory no longer includes Molotov or Kaganovich.

Malenkov

In the study of contemporary Soviet history, the flashbacks into the recent past provided by earlier printed sources can give us some insight into the simple working rules that govern its compilers. The changing distribution of glory and credit for Russian successes in the last war illustrates this very well.

In Volume VII of the Large Soviet Encyclopedia the State Committee of Defence set up on 30 June 1941 is said to have consisted of Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Malenkov, and Beria.

In a later volume, published after Stalin's death and Beria's fall, there are only four names left: Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, and Malenkov. When this particular volume was published Malenkov was still head of the government and Molotov the Foreign Minister, but Beria had already become an 'un-person'.

In the Russian edition, following the fall of the 'anti-party group', the State Committee on Defence is described as headed by Stalin, but no reference is made to other members. Instead we are told that 'K. E. Voroshilov, D. Z. Manuilski, N. S. Khrushchev, and A. S. Shcherbakov were directed to leading work in the army'. The enumeration of persons in the English edition is already slightly different: 'Prominent party leaders—N. S. Khrushchev, D. Z. Manuilski, A. S. Shcherbakov, K. Y. Voroshilov and A. A. Zhdanov were placed in key positions in the armed forces'.

Thus Molotov, Malenkov and Beria make their exit from the pages of history. They are not mentioned as the three speakers at Stalin's funeral. The funeral itself is not even mentioned, although it was prepared by Khrushchev as the Chairman of the Funeral Arrangements Committee.

The 'collective leadership' of the three post-Stalin triumvirs is, of course, also passed over in silence. The changes in the structure of the Soviet government made after Stalin's death are described impersonally 'Instead of two bodies, the Presidium and the Bureau of the Presidium, it was decided to have only one, the Presidium of the C.C. CPSU as established by the Party Rules'. The shifts in the composition of these bodies are not described.

But this anonymity ends in the next sentence, which says that 'it was found advisable to institute the post of First Secretary of the Central Committee. N. S. Khrushchev was elected to this post in September 1953'. What happened to the Secretariat in March 1953 is not disclosed.

The report made to the 19th CPSU Congress of the Party in October 1952 was delivered by Malenkov. This is omitted. Someone else who spoke on that occasion is mentioned instead: 'The Congress discussed N. S. Khrushchev's report on the changes in the party rules, and amended the latter'.

Zhukov

In the description of the battles of Moscow and Stalingrad, and of the fall of Berlin, the name of Marshal Zhukov does not appear. In dealing with the Moscow battle the textbook refers to the soldierly exploits of General Panfilov and the *politruk* Klochkov-Dnevy, in connection with Stalingrad the names of Generals Chuikov, Rodimtsev, Gurtsev and Gorokhov are enumerated, and as for Berlin, only the names of Sergeants Egorov and Kantariya (who put up the Soviet flag over the Reichstag) are given.

The Marshal's name is not mentioned in connection with the last war, and it is only towards the end of the chapter on the war that he appears, once, on the list of 'prominent military leaders'.

For good measure, other outstanding Soviet generals of the last war share the same distinction. Except for those we have mentioned above, all the others are just enumerated on this single list, without any reference to their particular military accomplishments. It is always the party that is the collective architect of victory, either as the organiser of the 'radical turn of the tide in the Great Patriotic War', or as the organiser of the 'liberation of Soviet soil from the fascist invaders'.

This treatment no doubt counterbalances Zhukov's efforts to implant 'the cult of his personality in the Soviet army . . . and to extol excessively his role in the Great Patriotic War', with which he is charged, and which, according to the textbook, caused his dismissal.

Khrushchev

Khrushchev comes into prominence in the new textbook only with the war and, of course, in the post-Stalin period. He is mentioned on earlier occasions, but usually in company.

During the Great Purge he was already First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, and he was a member of the Politbureau by the time of the 18th Congress in 1939, but the necessity to conceal the collective guilt of the Stalinist Politbureau during the 'infringements of the principle of collective leadership', as well as the erasure of the names of Malenkov, Molotov and Kaganovich, apparently contributed to the decision to start Khruhschev's historical career at a date later than that at which it really began.

Khrushchev's attack on Stalin in his speech at the 20th Congress remains 'secret'. This produces another embarrassing quandary for the book's editors, who quote the *Stenographic Report of the 20th Congress*, but cannot give any reference to the speech itself since it is not included in the *Report*.

The new textbook contains no personality cult of the present Party Secretary comparable to that of the old one. Yet the nearer it comes to the present, the more frequently are its pages sprinkled with Khrushchev's name. All the important decisions and achievements of the post-Stalin era are attributed to his personal initiative, starting with his condemnation of the personality cult.

The reader is afforded one measure of relief in so far as the new Secretary has not included a chapter on 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism' to match the one written by Stalin which had to be learnt by heart by countless Soviet citizens. Henceforth, philosophy is left to Lenin.

The new textbook was written with a better-educated audience in mind. The crude lies of the *Short Course* have been replaced by a more sophisticated method of circumventing the truth. It is no less dishonest for that; it is just that much longer. Nor is it any easier for readers without a thorough knowledge of the subject to discover the truth. While it has ceased to be a fictionalised biography of Stalin, it has by no means turned into a real historical work. As before, current considerations determine the treatment of events and personalities; as in the *Short Course*, history is still today's politics projected into the past.

The political significance of the new textbook can best be gauged by comparing its conclusions with those of the *Short Course*. Their formulation may be milder and more circumscribed, but the old Leninist message gets through in its Khrushchevian, as it did in its Stalinist, form. The former text read:

> The history of the party teaches us, first of all, that the victory of the proletarian revolution, the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is impossible without a revolutionary party of the proletariat, a party free from opportunism, irreconcilable towards compromisers and capitulators, and revolutionary in its attitude towards the bourgeoisie and its state power.

There is no less emphasis in the new text:

> The experience of more than half a century of social development has proved that the CPSU was right in the historical argument and struggle against the parties of the Second International, against the ideology and politics of Social Democracy . . . Both in theory and in practice the Social Democratic leaders invariably proceeded from their basic proposition that it is possible to reconcile the class interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, that the revolutionary overthrow of bourgeois rule is impermissible, and that the dictatorship of the proletariat is unnecessary, and that a coalition of bourgeois and Social Democratic parties should be formed instead.

THE EAST GERMAN ECONOMY

Germanicus

East Germany's economy is indeed in a bad way. The favourable impression which East Germany's political leaders tried to convey to foreign visitors during the Leipzig fair was largely undone when the country's chief planner Leuschner presented his draft plan for 1961 to the 12th session of the Central Committee. It had been known for some time that the economy had not progressed according to plan. The report on the development of the economy for 1960 revealed a significant departure from the buoyant trend of 1958 and 1959

and a return to the more modest rates of growth achieved in 1956 and 1957. Though high by Western standards, these rates are inflated owing to double counting in the industrial sphere, to say nothing of the exclusion of public services with their customarily low rates of growth.

Industrial production in 1960 is reported to have increased by 8 per cent against nearly 13 per cent in 1959; and the national income is supposed to have risen by 6 per cent against over 8 per cent in 1959. More significant is the decline in the rates of growth of the producer goods industries, traditionally given preference over consumer goods. Food processing alone of the principal sectors of light industry fared as well as or better in 1960 than in the previous year when farming had been badly affected by drought. Of all other individual industries only power and metal ore production succeeded in maintaining last year's rates of growth. The textile industry showed no increase at all.

The reasons for the slowing down in the expansion rate of the economy are manifold. In part they may be attributed to a substantial reduction in capital investment, the growth rate of which declined from over 25 per cent in 1959 to about 10 per cent in 1960. More important still was the psychological effect of the collectivisation drive last year, followed by the failure of the summit conference. Collectivisation was completed in the early summer of 1960 instead of 1965 as originally planned. The reaction of the population was reflected in a new record arrival of refugees in West Berlin and West Germany of over 19,000 in May 1960 against 12,000 a year before. During that time the proportion of farmers and their families among the flow of refugees more than doubled from 6 to 13 per cent. Although favourable weather prevented a crop disaster, work in the fields during harvesting was slack and listless. The autumn census showed numbers of milk cows practically unchanged and pig numbers below those of the autumn count of 1959. Milk output decreased, and the moderate increase in meat production was due mainly to premature slaughterings caused by collectivisation.

When the Seven Year Plan was inaugurated early in 1959, East Germany's avowed aim was to surpass West Germany in the same way as the Soviet Union was to surpass the United States. This target has been badly upset. West Germany's net industrial output rose by 12 per cent in 1960 and thus exceeded substantially, for the first time in years, East Germany's rate of industrial growth. As a further reduction from 8 per cent last year to 7 per cent this year is visualised in East Germany's plan for 1961, West Germany may well succeed in maintaining its lead. International comparisons can, of course, be highly misleading when methodological patterns and statistical procedures are as different as they are in the two parts of Germany today. The concept of gross industrial production, for instance, is still in use in East Germany although it has proved faulty in measuring plan fulfilment, labour productivity and allocation of investment funds. Multiple counting continues and fictitious prices are used in recording domestic and foreign transactions. Whereas these practices have been criticised severely in some parts of the Soviet orbit, in East Germany comment of this kind has been silenced since the former head of the Central Statistical Office fell from grace.

In a study of the structure of East Germany's economy [1] the American economist, Professor Stolper, has eliminated the faults of East German statistical practices and has succeeded thus in comparing like with like. During the two decades between 1936 and 1955 East Germany's industrial production, computed in pre-war prices, rose by a little more than a quarter whilst it doubled during the same period in West Germany. Adjusted to a per capita basis, industrial production increased by one-seventh in East Germany against one half in West Germany. Industry did not really start to grow until 1950 when its level had been reduced, by war and reparations, to less than three-quarters of pre-war. The gap between East and West Germany widened between 1950 and 1955, and it is widening once again now. Making use of Western terms, i.e., including public and private services, Professor Stolper, who leans over backwards to give East Germany its due, calculates a rise, between 1936 and 1955, of a mere 10 per cent in East Germany's gross national product compared with an increase of 80 per cent in West Germany. Consumption per head was still below pre-war in East Germany as late as 1957 whereas it had surpassed pre-war levels in West Germany as

[1] Wolfgang F. Stolper with the assistance of Karl W. Roskamp, *The Structure of the East German Economy*. Harvard University Press, 1960.

early as 1952. Even today the differential between the two parts of the country remains.[2]

As East Germany is poorly endowed with some essential natural resources, such as fuel and power and metal ores, it is heavily dependent upon foreign trade. Here progress has also been modest in the most recent past. Last year the total turnover of foreign trade was 6 per cent larger than in 1959; but whereas trade with the Western world rose by 24 per cent, it grew by 4 per cent only within the Soviet bloc and it even declined in the case of the Soviet Union and China. The same is true, according to East German trade statistics, of interzonal trade between the two parts of the country, but West German trade returns show in fact an increase by 6 per cent for the same period. During 1961 a modest rise of less than 5 per cent is expected in East Germany's foreign trade. Strenuous efforts, at the Leipzig Fair, to expand trade with the West are a measure of East Germany's disappointment with the slackening of intra-bloc trade. This is not to say that major changes in the pattern of foreign trade can be expected. Leuschner presented an austerity programme at the 12th session of the Central Committee, stressing in particular the need for economies in spending foreign exchange.

As in the past, the emphasis of the plan for 1961 is on the need to do better at home. The chief bottlenecks to be overcome are in the supply of fuel and power, labour and rolled metals. The building industry will continue to give preference to industrial projects. The deficit of one-eighth of urban dwelling space is unlikely to be reduced to any sizeable extent. In other respects, too, the consumer is unlikely to find the supply of goods sufficient in quantity or quality to match his purchasing power. Food and other light industries have been held down systematically for many years whilst basic industries and especially engineering have been developed vigorously. It is worth noting in this context that Leuschner in quoting consumption per head of population in his draft plan omits data for 1959 and 1960. Nor is there any longer any reference to surpassing West German living standards in the foreseeable future. In the last ten years more than one million persons have ceased to be self-employed and have been obliged to join the industrial labour force. Industrial working and living conditions thus matter more today than in the past. One in every three industrial workers still works a 48-hour week and the five-day week is not yet in sight by a long way. East German industrial wages remain below those of West Germany; they would have to be raised by more than one-third to compare with the purchasing power of West German wages for one and the same consumption basket. To put it differently, gross national product per head of population remains in East Germany at a level of approximately two-thirds of that in West Germany.

East Germany's economy is being integrated more and more into that of the Soviet bloc and it must thus be seen in this wider context. This is no easy matter since, in spite of considerable improvements in factual and numerical information, knowledge of economic development throughout the Soviet bloc is still limited. Since Stalin's death several annual statistical abstracts and other compilations have been issued by the Soviet Union, the example being followed by the countries of Eastern Europe. Even so, subjects which have no security grading in Western countries, such as the balance of payments are closely guarded secrets throughout the Soviet bloc. In these circumstances it is not surprising if some analysts tend to take the integration of the Soviet bloc economies for granted. This is a matter for consideration, but one thing is certain: East Germany has rapidly gained the position of principal partner, after the Soviet Union, within the bloc.

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[2] It is most gratifying to see how similar are the conclusions reached by independent Western analysts of the East German economic scene even where their method of analysis differs and the statistical basis of their examination lacks the wide coverage of Professor Stolper's study; ref. Germanicus, Eastern Germany's Economic Development. *Economia Internazionale*, Vol. IX, No. 2, Genoa 1956. A. Zauberman, *Industrial Development in Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Poland, 1937–1956*. Chatham House Memoranda 1958. It would seem that Professor Stolper overstates somewhat the decline in industrial production and gross national product reached by 1950 as a result of dismantling and reparations and also the rate of recovery during the two years following.

A NOTE ON COMECON*

K. F.

Comecon, the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, was founded more than ten years ago as a counter to the Marshall Plan which had attracted several countries of Eastern Europe and distracted them from allegiance to the Soviet Union. It was set up originally 'to strengthen the economic collaboration of the socialist countries and to co-ordinate their economic development on the basis of equal rights of all member states by organising the exchange of economic and technical experience and rendering mutual aid in raw materials, food and equipment'.[1] However, in the initial phase of its existence Comecon limited its activities to the sphere of trade relations and took a marginal interest only in problems of production.

After Stalin's death a more flexible policy was adopted. Reparations were terminated, Joint Stock Companies dissolved and export prices based on those of the world commodity markets. Duplication of industrial effort and national autarky were criticised, and Comecon was charged with the co-ordination of economic planning in the interest of self-sufficiency of the bloc as a whole rather than its members. In December, 1955 steps were taken to co-ordinate the Five Year Plans which were to commence in 1956. The Seventh Session of the Council was held, for the first time, in East Berlin (May 1956). It represented the first serious attempt at intra-orbit co-ordination of economic development. Standing commissions were created to deal with a wide variety of subjects ranging from fuel and power to foreign trade.

At the same time priorities of production were distributed throughout the orbit. These were based largely on existing industrial patterns and they took note of national susceptibilities, but certain restrictions on types of production and allocation of materials were exercised. The Soviet Union was the only country of the bloc which accepted no limitations of its programme of production. A certain degree of specialisation was aimed at in specific industries and certain standards of production were set, the numbers of different types being severely curtailed. Before these measures could become operative, Comecon was made ineffective as a result of the political events of October, 1956 which disrupted for a time production, trade and communications and thus intra-orbit co-ordination.

The Soviet Union felt obliged to concede the principles of national sovereignty and economic equality within Comecon. By the time of the Eighth Session of the Council held in June, 1957 in Warsaw the dislocations caused by the Hungarian rising had been overcome. Comecon could thus be charged with the co-ordination of long-term planning in important sectors of the national economies of member countries. Henceforth it was supposed to recommend and not to override. So as to eliminate balance of payments difficulties in intra-orbit trade, a multilateral payments scheme was created at the seat of the Soviet State Bank which was to operate as a clearing centre. Trade balances could thus be transferred into a multilateral ruble account on which members of Comecon were entitled to draw to the extent of three per cent of their total intra-orbit trade turnover.

In the sphere of production Comecon placed special importance on improvements in the supplies of fuel and power, ferrous and non-ferrous metals and in rail and water transport. It was actively concerned to promote co-ordination, specialisation, standardisation and integration. Whereas previously intra-orbit planning considered merely five-year periods, Comecon now regarded it as desirable to operate in terms of long-range plans covering periods of ten to fifteen years. As matters of political direction were involved, the need arose for a meeting of heads of Parties and Governments. An extraordinary session was held in May, 1958 in Moscow attended by political leaders of its eight European full members and by observers of its four associated Asian members, but not by Yugoslavia. Matters of principle were considered rather than technical

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* B. Kiesewetter, *Statistiken zur Wirtschaft Ost- und Suedosteuropas.* 5 vols. Berlin 1955–1959 B. Kiesewetter—K. Krueger, *Der Ostblock.* Berlin 1960.

[1] *Vneshnaya Torgovlya SSSR s sotsialisticheskimi Stranami.* Moscow, 1957.

details, but the installation of an intra-orbit oil pipeline was probably first discussed and decided upon on that occasion.

The decisions of the special meeting were put into practice at the Ninth Session of the Council held at Bucharest in June, 1958. New standing commissions were created for economic co-ordination, technical exchange in contruction projects, and co-operation in matters of transport beyond that of the railways where it had been in operation for some years. Reference was made to further specialisation in the engineering industries of the bloc. Although the authority of the Council was not weakened in any way by this measure, bilateral discussions were furthered among nearly all member countries of Comecon.

The change of policy in the Soviet Union and its overriding influence on the working of Comecon was reflected once more when prominence was given, at the time of the Tenth Session of the Council held in Prague in December, 1958 to the development of the chemical industries of the bloc. East Germany's know-how in this sphere was to be utilised fully. So as to secure the supply of important sources of fuel and raw materials for the chemical industries, co-operation in production, transport and processing of mineral oils was carried a significant step forward. An agreement was reached providing for the construction of pipelines between Soviet Russia on the one hand and Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary on the other hand, and for oil refineries to be set up in each of these countries. East Germany was charged with special responsibilities during the last of twelve chemical conferences convened by Comecon during 1958. The sessions of Comecon held in 1959 and 1960 were all designed to carry forward the programmes outlined at the important high level meeting of May, 1958 and another one called early in 1960.

During its second decade Comecon is intended to make speedier progress than during the first ten years in its drive towards economic integration. Apart from a well-established central secretariat staffed with permanent representatives acting under the direction of their respective Ministerial Councils or Plan Commissions, there are now standing commissions and their sub-committees meeting at frequent intervals. Policy directives are more precise than in the past; and a sense of urgency can be detected. Long-term trade agreements have been concluded between almost all members of the bloc, except for a Sino-Soviet agreement which remains outstanding. As most of these agreements are bilateral they do not fall under the jurisdiction of Comecon. Nor do defence matters concern the Council; but overall planning can hardly ignore these aspects of economic development even where they do not require the approval of any of the standing commissions. However, in spite of marked improvements in organisation, Comecon continues to work slowly and inefficiently.

Whilst a certain degree of co-ordination has been achieved in dealings with underdeveloped countries of the West, competition seems as frequent as co-operation. Blueprints and price quotations appear to be jealously guarded rather than freely exchanged by national delegates to the Council. Considering effort and outlay, the results of intra-orbit co-ordination seem modest, and the fruits of integration a long way off—except in certain selected strategic sectors of the economies. Difficulties inherent in Soviet-type economies remain. The economic method underlying all planning in the Soviet orbit is that of balances, in physical terms, of output and consumption. Input-output calculations in financial terms, as practised in the West, are almost unknown. Only recently has the question of an overhaul of the price system become topical. As the Polish Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers Jarosewicz once said: 'The economic system which has prevailed hitherto is an abracadabra about prices, costs and wages. No wise man can tell what is profitable or not'.[2]

In so far as Comecon's work is to be crowned with greater success than in the past, it may well lead to a higher degree of economic self-sufficiency. As a corollary East-West trade may shrink rather than grow once the immediate requirements of integrated planning have been met. In trade with the West, preference is given to specific projects in selected underdeveloped countries. As a result the need for East-West trade may be reduced rather than increased in the years to come.

The total volume of goods exchanged in intra-bloc trade is impressive and rising even if its share in total trade has lately given way a little to trade with developing countries. This is, as Professor Kiesewetter reminds his readers, a residual rather than an integral part of Soviet-type economies whose ultimate aim

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[2] Trybuna Ludu, November 18, 1956.

remains autarky, i.e., the complete control of all resources and the direction of their use. International trade does not comply with this pattern and thus remains an alien element of communist planning. This is reflected clearly in the marginal position which trade holds throughout the Soviet bloc in every one of its plans. It provides a means admirably suited to gain maximum political returns from minimum economic commitments.

FRANZ KAFKA'S HOME CITY

Robert Weltsch

In the ever-growing literature on Franz Kafka much attention has always been paid to the circumstances of his origin. He was a German-speaking Jew in the predominantly Czech city of Prague, at that time a provincial capital within the Austrian (Habsburg) Empire. This may explain many of the peculiarities of his work though by no means all. It is only natural that those concerned with the—sometimes meticulous—exegesis of his writings and with the analysis of his character, take this biographical fact as a point of departure. And nobody can deny that it is of great importance, because in many respects Prague was unique among the cities of Europe in its magical and controversial grandeur. To see Kafka against the background of his native city is enticing, especially to his own compatriots. Prague was a Western city until 1948, inextricably linked with Western history and culture. It is now separated from the West, and it therefore arouses particular curiosity to find out how the present generation looks upon the recent past.

Let us say immediately that this book [1] that comes to us from Prague in 1961 is a pleasant surprise. It shows that at least part of the intelligentsia in the most Western of the satellites has not lost all touch with Western intellectual life. The author certainly knows his Kafka thoroughly and is susceptible to the veiled hints and hidden allusions in Kafka's writing. It is not clear whether the book is for export only, a prize thrown to Kafka-enthusiasts in the German-speaking West. If it is distributed (in Czech?) in its country of origin too, it would indicate that knowledge of Kafka's work is presumed to exist there no less than in the 'bourgeois' world.

The book tells the story of Kafka's relation to Prague and illustrates it skilfully with beautiful photographs, referring to single passages of Kafka's work. It succeeds in evoking before our eyes the Prague of the past, with all the imponderabilia that implies, a city of great memories, its old streets and buildings surviving undamaged, less changed perhaps than any other capital city in Europe. But today the setting is different, and the forces that determined Kafka's outlook, in so far as they derived from social factors, have disappeared. This the authors know. But even the *coulisse* is still of considerable suggestive power.

In the social sense there were, in fact, several Pragues in Kafka's days (before 1918), separated from each other almost like watertight compartments, and only seldom was the border line transgressed. There was the Prague of the small circle of the aristocracy, officers, and higher officials, industrialists and professors, all representing the German-speaking sector, which was also inflated by the inflow of people (especially students) from the Sudeten region. Then there was the vast 'real' city with its suburbs, the mass of Czech-speaking people, with genuine links with the countryside, the peasant country, the market place, workers and servants, the capital of a very lively, awakening nation seeking its national expression, with an educated layer at the top, with students, universities, theatres, and a flourishing cultural life. And finally the third group, the Jews, more peculiar here perhaps than in any other European city, because they stood in the twilight between two great struggling nationalist camps. Middle-class Jews, however, provided the backbone of German cultural life, especially in the theatre, literature, and music. Mr Frynta gives special care to the exposition of this third

[1] *Franz Kafka lebte in Prag.* Text von Emanuel Frynta. Photographien von Jan Lukas. Artia Praha 1960. (In German.)

group's antecedents and development, for it is this group from which Kafka springs, and he does it with remarkable intuition and understanding.

A large part of the book is devoted to a sketch of Jewish history in Prague and its psychological consequences for the character of the community. Kafka was born only twenty years after the Jews had attained equal political status, and at the time of Kafka's childhood they still lived in a sort of invisible ghetto, by which their mentality was dominated, consciously or unconsciously. Prague had once had a very famous and respected Jewish community, with outstanding scholars and rabbis. But all this had gone. The principal driving force of the Jews throughout the preceding century had been the wish 'to get out of the ghetto'. They lived in revolt against their own past, but they could not get rid of it. This past was a source of aversion, of fear, and of innumerable jokes, many of them of a specific local flavour. In spite of all that, it was the only kind of roots to which a man like Kafka, void of any other tradition and 'without a living present' (p. 50), could turn.

The Jews of Prague were German-speaking, not only, as Frynta rightly says, because the Emperor Joseph II, when he opened the gates of the ghetto, forced them into German schools, but also because of the natural affinity of their spoken language, which through the centuries had been a German dialect interspersed with Hebrew.

The old ghetto existed even physically when Kafka was a child, though most Jews had moved out; natives of Prague now over 70 still remember its picturesque, filthy, dark little streets, sinister not only because of their outward appearance but also for their bad reputation as a centre of the underworld and of prostitution in the very heart of the city. It had ceased to be the abode of the Jews, exept for some pedlars and junk shops, but the ancient synagogues were still there. For Jewish children it was a fascinating experience, full of anguish and mystery, when they went with their parents to the synagogues, on the eve of the great holy days, from their comfortable quarters in the new town into the dark mysteries of what had been the living-place of unknown ancestors. It is no surprise that many of the pictures in this book have been made available to the author by the Jewish Museum in Prague, an ably-administered state institution. They convey an idea of the close entanglement of central Prague with the Jewish past.

The emancipation of the Jews started with the revolution of 1848 and was concluded in 1860. About the turn of the century, the so-called Sanitation Plan was put into effect, which implied a regulation of the river bank (to prevent the frequent inundation of the old ghetto that extended east of the river) and raising the level of the whole quarter. The ghetto was doomed, and after 1900 it disappeared completely, with all its dubious corners, but also most of the synagogues, except the museum piece of the 13th-century Altneuschul and three or four others, and of course the famous old cemetery which is still shown to tourists. A new district was built with wide streets and modern houses, and in its main street Kafka later lived. In his youth the family had lived in the historical main square (Ring) of the Old City, on the very outskirts of the ghetto, and masterly photographs show the places which little Franz had to pass on his way to school. They illustrate what Kafka later wrote in retrospect about his anguish in these early school years. His high school (Altstädter Gymnasium), also shown, was housed in the magnificent *Kinsky Palais* on the same square, and in the same building were old Kafka's business premises.

This was in Austrian Bohemia, and in Kafka's work we find the forebodings of the disintegration of the world in which he lived, a farewell to the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, and indeed to the old Europe. There is a similar melancholy in the symphonies of Gustav Mahler. Both struggled with the demon in their own breast and with the absurdity of life, and longed for a redemption which seemed out of reach. Most of their work is unmistakably autobiographical. Mahler once said: 'I am thrice a homeless man: as a Bohemian among Austrians, as an Austrian among the Germans, and as a Jew among the peoples of the whole world. . . .'[2] It was not the clear, straightforward, and natural condition of a creative man rooted in his soil among his own people. The Ahasueric feeling of homelessness was intensified in the case of Kafka, who as a sensitive child reluctantly absorbed the shaky remnants of a Judaism devoid of all religious

[2] Quoted by Redlich, *Bruckner and Mahler* (London, 1955), p. 110.

or spiritual content which had been reduced to a purely social function. (See the *Letter to His Father.*) To some, however, it may appear artificial to ascribe the feeling of estrangement, as Mr Frynta does, solely to the effects of the Prague atmosphere. Its causes may be more general. In a recent essay the Hebrew writer and literary critic Dr B. Kurzweil shows that some of the most spectacular motives in Kafka's writing appear also in the novels of contemporary Hebrew writers in Russia, although they certainly did not know of each other. Human beings disguised as animals, or futile wandering without reaching the end, are, in his view, Jewish literary 'archetypes' emerging from a collective unconscious not geographically confined. It is a reflection of the absurdity of Jewish existence in its encounter with the Gentile world in a phase of degeneration of religious faith. Confronted with the full impact of the extra-Jewish European world, the Jew, emerging from the ghetto, was bound to feel a stranger.

According to Frynta, Kafka's own world was divided into three sectors, and in each of them he was a stranger. When he penetrated one of them, he felt more bitterly the remoteness of the two others. This triple division is perhaps a 'normal' situation, though other people are not so conscious of it, or it is less visible where you have no clearly defined national communities living together. Especially where Jews are concerned, this is by no means as unusual as Mr Frynta assumes. A Jew in one of Austria's Eastern provinces in Kafka's days was almost inevitably in the same position, let us say in Lemberg (Lvov), where he belonged to the Yiddish-speaking Jewish nationality, was educated mostly in Polish, and dependent on Austro-German culture spread from the centre of Vienna and symbolised at that time by the ever-present *Neue Freie Presse* Once the rigorous predominance of Jewish orthodox faith was shattered with the advent of enlightenment at the end of the nineteenth century, this became the typical Jewish situation. They were always strangers somewhere, and even in their own house. It is, therefore, understandable that some of Kafka's interpreters and also his principal biographer Max Brod, regard Kafka's Jewishness as the decisive force in his life, and possibly Kafka himself inclined to this view, since in his later years he sought the way back to his Jewish 'mothers', although—or perhaps because—he found, as Frynta recalls, the German word for mother so unsatisfying and inadequate.

Moreover, the unattainability of the three worlds which made Kafka so susceptible to attacks—Frynta believes his story 'A Little Woman' symbolises Prague—is perhaps only a special case of unattainability; the looked-for world was the castle to which access could not be found. It is a fact that, as Frynta says, Prague was the city where a castle really existed, though this one was clearly visible from almost every point of the city, and completely accessible. The point is that it was not inhabited by a ruling prince.

Frynta retraces Kafka's belief in the inconceivableness of the real world back to the fact that he had to write in a feeble language, the German of Bohemia, which was detached from its popular background and artificially preserved as an island in the Czech sea. But this is only one of many possible explanations, for no language is adequate once one discovers the discrepancy between the visible and the 'real' world. It might as easily be traced back to Kantian philosophy, and that would be equally unsatisfactory. Kafka's language was by no means feeble, and Frynta does not exaggerate the point; he does not pretend to have found the key to Kafka's world, and this absence of dogmatism strikes one as rather sympathetic. His book is mainly intended to point out certain startling parallelisms between Kafka's world and the cryptic atmosphere of Prague. One can perhaps say that Frynta not only explains Kafka in terms of Prague but also, and perhaps more to the point, Prague in terms of Kafka.

The beautifully reproduced pictures help to revive Kafka's dream world. The translation from the Czech (by Lotte Elsnerova) is so good as to make one doubt whether it really is a translation. At any rate, the little chassidic anecdote (p. 135) has been taken textually, though without acknowledgment, from the German version of Martin Buber's *Chassidic Tales.*

SHORTER NOTICES

I. M. Maisky, **Puteshestvie v Proshloe.** Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk, Moscow, 1960. 326 pp.

Very interesting, though selective, and not always truthful recollections of the Russian emigration in London between 1912 and 1917 by an old Menshevik who subsequently became Soviet ambassador to the United Kingdom and is now an 'Academician'. The book contains some fascinating and little-known details about Maisky's contemporaries such as Chicherin, Litvinov, Theodore Rothstein, as well as of course Lenin and some of the old Narodniks (Kropotkin, Stepnyak and his widow, Zundelevich et al.). There are special sections on the Fifth Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in London (1907), and on the conference of the Socialist International in Copenhagen (1912). Maisky writes well and has a prodigious memory for people, places, and even street numbers. He appears to have become a London *lokalpatriot* during his years in the British capital, and writes with nostalgia about such unromantic places as Charlotte Street and Belsize Park.

Otto Schiller, **Das Agrarsystem der Sowjetunion.** Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Osteuropaforschung. Tübingen, 1960. 171 pp. 17 DM.

This is a short but highly competent introduction by the leading German expert on Soviet agriculture. The author believes that there has been a 'normalisation' in Soviet agriculture since the very critical period in the early fifties; the most difficult phase in the socialist transformation of agriculture seems to be over. The book has an excellent, very detailed bibliography, and is the best short treatise on the subject.

Elliot R. Goodman, **The Soviet Design for a World State.** Columbia University Press; Oxford University Press, 1960. 512 pp. 42s.

Professor Goodman of Brown University has analysed the writings of Lenin, Bukharin, Stalin, as well as of contemporary Soviet and other communist authorities, and reached the conclusion that the Soviet Union has never abandoned the idea of a world state. Perhaps the most interesting parts of the book are the sections on 'The issue of Centralism versus Federalism in the Leninist Era', and on 'Soviet Reactions to Supranational Plans from the Non-Soviet World'. There is little on China; if Professor Goodman is probably right in stressing the hard core of continuity in Soviet thinking, he has perhaps not paid enough attention to the divisive and centrifugal trends within the Soviet bloc and the gradual emergence of polycentric communism.

Mary Holdsworth, **Soviet African Studies 1918–1959: An annotated Bibliography** (in two parts). Royal Institute of International Affairs; Oxford University Press, 1961. 76 pp. and 80 pp. 12s.

Mrs Holdsworth has put African experts and students of world affairs alike deeply in her debt by producing a most important and topical work of reference. Soviet writing on African affairs was sporadic in the twenties and thirties, but there has been a veritable flood of publications during the last few years following the establishment of new research institutes and, generally speaking, the new Soviet interest in Africa. While the material of the fifties is quoted and analysed in admirable detail, there are gaps for the twenties and thirties; some of the more important articles published in *Revoliutsionny Vostok* and *Communist International* in the thirties are missing.

Robert Vincent Daniels, **The Conscience of the Revolution: Communist Ooposition in Soviet Russia.** Harvard University Press; Oxford University Press, 1961. 526 pp. 55s.

This is the fullest history so far of the internal struggles in the Soviet Communist Party from the early dissensions in 1917 to the story of the Syrtsov-Lominadze faction in the early thirties, with additional short sections on the fate of the individual oppositionists after Stalin's rule had become absolute. There are some highly useful appendices (composition of the supreme party organs) and some that are less so—graphic analyses of 'Left' and 'Right' in party history.

Gerd Ruge, **Gespräche in Moskau.** Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1961. 357 pp.

Some highly revealing observation on the Soviet cultural scene by a young German correspondent (see his essay on Soviet music in the current issue of SURVEY) and a Siberian travelogue.

Gerhard Zwerenz, **Aergernisse: Von der Maas bis an die Memel.** Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1961. 341 pp.

The unorthodox obiter dicta, mostly in prose, on Germany East and West by a prominent ex-communist intellectual who came to the West in 1957 but has not become an uncritical admirer of the *Wirtschaftswunder* and its social and cultural consequences.

Leo A. Loubere, **Louis Blanc: His Life and his Contribution to the Rise of French Jacobin-Socialism.** Northwestern University Press, 1961. 256 pp. $6.50.

The first full-length study in English of the life and ideas of one who stood somewhere midway between 'utopian' and 'scientific' socialists. Blanc played an important part in French Nineteenth Century history, and his writings are of some relevance in connection with the current Soviet bloc discussions about the transition to 'full communism'. Blanc, inter alia, developed a theory of imperialist expansion which has some startling resemblances to the writings of Hilferding, Luxemburg, and Lenin on the same subject sixty years later.

Frederic C. Barghoorn, **The Soviet Cultural Offensive.** Princeton University Press; Oxford University Press, 1961. 353 pp. 60s.

A very detailed survey of Soviet 'cultural diplomacy', in particular during the last decade, including a review of cultural exchanges, sections on VOKS and its successors, American-Soviet exchanges, etc. 'Despite the efflorescence of cultural diplomacy under Khrushchev . . . Soviet policy appeared to be as allergic as ever to tolerance of competing ideologies'. The author thinks that Soviet-Western exchanges should be based on 'equivalency' rather than reciprocity. He also pleads for more attention on the part of the American public to the problems involved in playing host to Soviet delegations visiting the United States.

Cyril E. Black, editor, **The Transformation of Russian Society.** Harvard University Press; Oxford University Press, 1961. 695 pp. 77s.

Some 35 papers presented at a conference at Arden House (New York) in April 1958, covering a very wide range of topics: 'Law, Politics, and Social Change'; 'Social Stratification'; 'Education, Scholarship, and Religion'; 'Family, Youth, and Human Welfare'; 'Personal and Social Values'; by leading students (mostly American) of Soviet affairs.

George F. Kennan, **Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin.** Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown. 1961. $5.75.

The relaxed and colloquial style (the work is written up from lectures delivered at Oxford and Harvard) do not conceal Mr. Kennan's firm control of his subject. The scaffolding of his structure rests on a broad and solid foundation of knowledge and experience conveyed through a mind that is sceptical but not cynical, objective but not detached, critical but not destructive. In this book he has written not a continuous history, but a series of illuminating analyses of the major disagreements which divided Russia from the West from the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 to Stalin's death in 1953. It is a story in which he finds that misunderstanding was often as fruitful a source of conflict as malice; he is critical now —as he was at the time—of the inexcusable ignorance in the West of Soviet aims and purposes in 1944–45, when the Allies were prepared to guarantee to Stalin the fruits of his deal with Hitler. But his hostility to communism and his concern over Soviet intentions only make him more aware of the errors committed by his own side, more conscious of the defects in the society which claims his loyalty. He exploits his theme to plead for balance and moderation, not because—or not only because —no 'other side' is ever totally in the wrong, just as one's own side is never totally in the right, but because these virtues are politically so much more rewarding than fanaticism.

The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union. Edited with introductions and notes by A. Z. Rubinstein. Random House. 1960. $6.60.

Starting with Lenin and ending with Khrushchev, Mr Rubinstein has gathered together significant statements on Soviet attitudes to the rest of the world. In part his readings are arranged chronologically—'1917–21: The Formative Years', 'The Search for Security: 1934–41'—and in part by subject—'The Ideological Bases', 'The role of the underdeveloped areas', etc. Each section has an introduction that is thoughtful and clear, and

offers no easy answers. To these statements from the Soviet side Mr Rubinstein has added essays by five well-known American scholars which greatly enhance the value of his book.

Soviet Conduct in World Affairs: A selection of Readings compiled by Alexander Dallin. Columbia University Press. London: Oxford University Press. 1960.

This too might be called a book of readings, but entirely from United States authors, and the list is impressive. Nearly all are reprinted from periodicals, such as Mr Kennan's famous article in *Foreign Affairs* on 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct', and Daniel Bell's amusing and stimulating analysis of 'Ten Theories in Search of Reality'. Professor Mosely on Soviet techniques of negotiation, and Professor Karpovich on 'Russian Imperialism or Communist aggression?' are well worth re-reading. In this selection of interpretations of Soviet foreign policy advanced by well-informed American scholars every reader, of whatever complexion, will find plenty of food for thought.

R. Conquest, **Power and Policy in the USSR.** London: Macmillan. 1961. 485 pp. 35s.

This study of Soviet dynastics (1950–60) is 'concerned with the interpretation of the obscure and often sensational events which characterise the struggle for personal position and power within the Soviet leadership, and the bearing of these events on Soviet policy-making'.

Everyman's Concise Encyclopedia of Russia, by S. V. Utechin. London: J. M. Dent & Co. 1961. 623 pp. 30s.

An extremely useful encyclopedic dictionary, this book contains some 2,000 entries on Russian history and politics, geography, philosophy, literature and the arts, and, generally speaking, every aspect of Russian life.

Geoffrey Bailey, **The Conspirators,** London; Victor Gollancz Ltd. 1961. pp. 306. 21s.

The blurb of this book announces that it is 'both scholarly and exciting'. Unfortunately, what is scholarly in it is not exciting and what is exciting is certainly not scholarly. In particular its description of the Tukhachevsky affair is based on assertions unsupported by a shred of evidence. Its 'sources' on contemporary history are a strange mixture, and no critical attempt has been made to assess their reliability. Among the books quoted with solemn seriousness to establish this or that historical 'fact' are the works of G. Z. Bessedovsky, *My Uncle Joe*, by the non-existent nephew of Stalin, Budu Svanidze, and the notorious product of the Stalinist school of falsification, *The Great Conspiracy*, by M. Sayers and A. Kahn. The subject of the book is indeed exciting, but it awaits a more serious historian.

Ronald Hingley, **Under Soviet Skins,** Hamish Hamilton. London. 1961. pp. 224. 21s.

This unassuming little book possesses more virtues than some *blasé* Sovietologists may be ready to admit. It is addressed to the general public and naturally it does not offer 'anything new' to a student of Soviet affairs. But this is not its purpose: it gives a non-specialist reader a balanced view of the most important elements of Soviet life and mentality, unadorned either by the jargon of the professional analysts of the 'system' or by the easy impressionism of the 'Intourist tourist' whose generalisations are based on the quadrangle: GUM, Metropole, Hotel Ukraina, and Bolshoi Theatre. The reports of this author are based on the solid knowledge of studies of his subject and not only on his own impressions, interesting as they may be. It should be therefore a very useful book, a sort of 'ten easy lessons for the intending tourist'. The last section should be a virtual *sine qua non* to all who do not know what 'manipulating the foreigner' means. No trip to the Soviet Union can be very useful without prior understanding of the distinction between what Mr Hingley calls the 'hieratic' and the 'demotic' language in Soviet usage. Altogether this 'untourist report' is a valuable guide to all the tourists increasingly availing themselves of the opportunities of 'cultural exchanges' and 'peaceful coexistence'.

David Granick, **The Red Executive, A Study of the Organisation Man in Russian Industry,** Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London; 1960. pp. 334. 21s.

This study of the Soviet 'organisation man' is written from the perspective of an American organisation man, with all the predictable consequences. There is of course nothing wrong in an American specialist in management studies trying to analyse the Soviet and American methods of management; what is disquieting is the tendency to go beyond the field of comparison and to indulge in didactic

(*continued on page iii of cover*)

generalisations for which this kind of study is not the best possible starting-point. The result is what can only be called a series of misunderstandings. If the study had been confined to a comparison of the functions and activities of economic and industrial managers in the two countries, it would have had something to recommend it. But the Soviet 'organisation man' includes the professional functionaries of that slightly specific body, the Communist Party; and the inclusion of the *apparatchik* within the area of comparison completely vitiates Mr Granick's analysis. In fact, it leads him to make some assertions which are quite nonsensical and show a basic lack of understanding of the political aspect of the problem. Thus one chapter in Mr Granick's study is devoted to a comparison between the Soviet Communist Party and American corporate stockholders, with the Presidium 'very much the board of directors of the Soviet Union'. The delightful conclusion is that 'both the Presidium and board of directors are appropriately viewed as arenas in which stockholder and management forces reach agreement, and in which they occasionally lock horns'. (This incidentally is a fair sample of the style in which the book is written.) The conclusion is not surprising: 'The Communist Party does meet the Soviet definition of democracy' (how can it be otherwise?). 'Politics is not something far off in the Kremlin or even in the city hall, but is represented by a neighbour who can fix a summons, clear up red tape, or see that garbage is collected properly. If nothing else, the Soviet citizen can at least pitch his beef into the ear of this sympathetic minor representative of the powers that be. This is politics with a personal touch' (p. 197).

Mr Granick's excursions into sociological analysis are on the same level as his handling of political theory. He devotes a whole chapter to knocking down some Aunt Sallys, stereotypes summarised in italics in the form of sentences beginning with the formula; 'Everyone knows that . . .'. Such views may be prevalent among executives in the Middle West, but even middle-brow students of Soviet affairs should be spared this imaginary duel.

His positive ability to be informative about the Soviet social scene can be gauged from the following sample:

> It is true that the term 'proletariat' has been gradually expanded to include artists and managers; by now, virtually everyone in the country comes under the folds of this verbal cloak of approval. Yet despite all the Fancy-Dan Marxist gymnastics, it seems certain that the pick-and-shovel coal miner is viewed as a better proletarian than is the bookkeeper in the mining office (p. 59).

The facts are precisely the opposite: the term 'proletariat' has not been expanded to include artists and managers; it was the term 'intelligentsia' which has been stretched to include some working-class categories, such as foremen (*proraby, mastera, desyatniki*), dispatchers, norm-controllers (*normirovshchiki*), as 'everybody' who takes the trouble to consult the Soviet Statistical Yearbook (Moscow, 1959, p. 672) can find out for himself.

But then Mr Granick thinks that 'the view of class which is expounded by Marxists is quite straightforward' (p. 307). Alas poor (Fancy-Dan) Yorick! If we could only have this unfinished chapter on class in the third volume of *Das Kapital*! And if only people who do not know how Marxist concepts are in fact applied to the Soviet social scene in official publications would refrain from writing about them.

But even if Mr Granick had shown this commendable restraint, the more positive side of his sociological analysis would have little to recommend it, as it is shot through with inaccuracies and statements for which there is little evidence (such as his disquisitions on social mobility in the Soviet Union). L.L.

Gregory Grossman, **Soviet Statistics of Physical Output of Industrial Commodities**, Princeton University Press. 1960. pp. 151. $5.00.

Soviet statistics are a subject of disagreement among specialists and of agreement among non-specialists. The former cannot agree how they should be handled, the latter either accept them at their face value or reject them as a whole. Clearly there is scope for enlightenment here.

Professor Grossman's study is a model of its kind: it is informative, concise, and it ends with a balanced analysis of the Soviet presentation of statistics. Together with Dr Jasny's *Commentary* on the Soviet Statistical Yearbook it is the best introduction to Soviet statistics in existence. It should be highly recommended to all students interested in the subject: even those who may find the more technical part of the book too difficult will gain much from the general conclusions lucidly presented.

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